

**‘SEX INDUSTRY’ WORLDS:
MASSAGE PARLOURS, ESCORT AGENCIES, AND
THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF
SEX WORK IN CHRISTCHURCH**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis embeds the dyadic sex worker-client relationship in the wider network structures and practices of the 'sex industry' in Christchurch. It details the actual practices of owners and managers of sex businesses in the different organisational forms of massage parlours and escort agencies. The thesis argues that the 'sex industry' has emerged from the complex relationships which have developed between sex businesses, sex workers, legal statutes, police enforcement practices, and sex worker organisations in a context shaped by responses to the risk of HIV virus and AIDS in the 'sex industry'. The thesis concludes with a brief exploration of the dilemmas confronting those advocating the decriminalisation of prostitution activities.

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INTRODUCTION

SEX AND MONEY: THE BUSINESS OF PROSTITUTION

“One reason that people find the sex industry so threatening is that we combine two things that people are most threatened by: sex and money” (Christchurch branch Coordinator of the New Zealand Prostitutes’ Collective).

Christchurch, colloquially known by many of its locals as ‘the most British city outside of Britain’, portrays itself as a small, quiet, conservative, middle class white settlement on the edge of the empire (Brown, 1997). The stoic bronze figure of Queen Victoria (photo next page) sits in juxtaposition to the hard-board figure of Blondie the ‘cow girl’ (photo next page). Two different images of women, two different images of the city.

As Geertz (cited Ortner, 1984, p.129) suggests, it is public symbols such as these through which “...the members of a society communicate their world view, value-orientations, ethos, and all the rest to one another, to further generations” - and to sociologists trying to come to terms with life in Christchurch.

For myself, the massage parlours in and around the Manchester Street area are still the most striking feature of the ‘sex industry’ in Christchurch. The tacky and now slightly tawdry signs, the big old buildings and the curtains that remain firmly drawn day and night formed my first impressions of the ‘sex industry’. For the social science operative in me - la Philip Marlowe and Erving Goffman - the combination of sex and money involved in the organisation of prostitution offered fertile ground for sociological investigation.

While I have endeavoured in this thesis to move the focus of research from the dyadic sex worker-client relationship into the social, economic and legal organisation of the ‘sex industry’, this project is only just a beginning. Even though I have talked to many people in the industry there is still much I do not know, and much I have not said. This thesis is a preliminary investigation into



'sex industry' worlds and the social organisation of the sex work in Christchurch.

The massage parlour signs depicting salacious images of women are not just symbols advertising access to women's bodies and their sexuality for the pleasure of men (Dworkin, 1987); they also symbolise the embeddedness of the 'sex industry' in profit making enterprises. This industry brings together both sex and money. Taken separately, having sex is not an uncommon experience, and in these more sexually liberal times, nor is having sex with virtual strangers. So too, profit making enterprises are the norm in Christchurch. Singularly, these activities are nothing out of the ordinary, yet brought together they create an interesting set of social, economic and legal activities in a changeable organisational setting.

It does not seem exceptional, given that sex has evolved as an 'artificially scarce resource' in our 'capitalist' society (Lee, 1979), that profit making organisations would have developed to combine sex and money. These organisations are in many ways similar to other businesses in that they are owned and managed by people whose main interest is to make a profit from selling certain services. As in all businesses, owners and managers play a very important part in determining how organisations operate, which in turn affects the ways that workers perceive and do their work (Jackall, 1988; Wilson, 1989).

However, sex workers are also self employed business people who use the organisational form of the massage parlour and escort agency as a way of creating and stabilising their own work and income. Their individual actions, incentives and mobility in the 'sex industry' are important factors in the way that individual businesses operate.

The organisation of commercial sex businesses marks the intersection of a number of sociological constructs - including organisations, markets, community, rhetoric and gender. And like all human activities, the organisation of prostitution services involves the joint activities of a number of

people (Becker, 1982). Through the implicit and explicit cooperation of commercial sex business owners, sex workers, clients and the police, prostitution is organised, advertised, commodified and consumed. This thesis seeks to understand how this cooperation comes about, and how, out of it, is produced what is recognised by participants and onlookers alike, as the Christchurch 'sex industry'.

Research on madams, pimps, and sex workers has comprised much of academic's response to understanding the people involved in the organisation of 'sex industry' worlds (Milner and Milner, 1973; Sheehy, 1971; Heyl, 1979; Winick & Kinsie, 1971; Hoigard & Finstad 1992; Wood Hill, 1993). Historic studies have yielded interesting descriptive pieces about period madams, but little in-depth analysis of the everyday organisation and workings of commercial sex (Sheehy, 1971; Winick & Kinsie, 1971; Wood Hill, 1993). A notable exception to this is Barbara Sherman Heyl's book The Madam as Entrepreneur (1979) which provides a lucid description of the operations of a single business. Heyl, however, does not embed the business in the operations of the market for prostitution or interactions with the law and the police which also affect the ways in which owners, managers and workers act. The Milner's (1973) description of 'pimps' with "silk suits, alligator boots, [and] Rolls Royce's", did not resemble the owners and managers I was meeting in Christchurch, nor did these owners and managers resemble the violent extortionists in Gail Sheehy's book Hustling (1971).

Feminist academic research has made a substantial contribution to the literature on prostitution, however much of it did not further my understanding of the 'sex industry'. Noah Zatz (1997), in her recent article, outlines the competing narrative discourses that have endeavoured to make sense of prostitution. A brief outline of this narrative will orientate the reader to better understand why I have chosen to move outside this literature in this thesis, in search of an eclectic use of theory informed by my empirical research.

Zatz (1997) suggests that the least complicated theoretical approach to prostitution is the free contract (contractarian) approach. This sees prostitution as an unremarkable payment of a fee for the performance of a service. As long as entrance into the contract is freely chosen rather than coerced, the state should not interfere. Many prostitutes' rights groups have found support in this argument.

'Contractarian's' therefore believe that 'sound prostitution' is possible within a free market of sexual services through which anyone, male or female, may have the opportunity to be a buyer or a seller (McIntosh, 1996). This position offers some common sense arguments for prostitutes' rights groups and for the decriminalisation of the 'sex industry', but it did not adequately explain the complexity of relationships I was observing in the 'sex industry'. It had little room to accommodate the inequalities of sex work or the brokerage systems involved in the organisation of prostitution.

I had similar difficulties in using a feminist-marxist interpretation of prostitution which suggests that every sale of sexual services is entrance into relations of subordination that transform the worker into a commodified object. Marx wrote: "Prostitution is only a *specific* expression of the *general* prostitution of the *laborer*" (1964, p.133 quoted in Zatz, 1997). This theoretical position offers fruitful comparisons between prostitution and other kinds of paid service work and with forms of exploitation that may accompany them (Hanson, 1996). Yet it gives little room to conceptualise the economic benefits of sex work and/or the specific complexities of combining sex and money in profit making businesses.

The radical feminist contribution emphasises prostitution as linked to the organisation of sexuality and gender. As Zatz (1997) suggests, the radical feminist position mirrors the marxist one; instead of identifying how workers' subordination allows their labour to be appropriated, radical feminists focus on how women's subordination allows their sexuality to be appropriated. Radical feminist analysis links prostitution to marriage as the appropriation of female

sexuality by men in exchange for some kind of economic reward (Dworkin, 1987 cited in Zatz, 1997). "Men control women's sexuality by institutionalising the access to it through the dual institutions of monogamous marriage and prostitution" (Knight, 1987, p.1). This position cannot explain adequately why it is that many of the people own prostitution businesses are women rather than men. This position limits the exploration of alternative spaces (such as female owned escort agencies) and avenues for resistance, as more women, gay men and transgendered people push the boundaries of the organisation of sexual services. Most of all, this position is not conducive to listening to what sex workers are actually saying.

Radical sex theorist, so Zatz (1997) suggests, treat the monetary exchange as just another sexual variation, constructed around desire and sexual exploration. This position ignores prostitutes' emphasis on their practice as work with, at most, an ambiguous relationship to desire. Moreover, it obscures the fact that the vast majority of prostitutes enter their profession simply to earn money, not because sex for money turns them on (Zatz, 1997). In this way it offers little understanding for a study on profit-making sex organisations.

In addition to these feminist theoretical positions on prostitution, two other strong voices have dominated the literature on sex work. Firstly, the unmediated views of sex workers who aim at contributing to the process of making 'women's lives visible' (Jordan, 1991). They have offered a plethora of experiential writing which has operated as an effective consciousness raising tool (Zatz, 1997) for both sex workers and non sex workers alike. Similarly, such accounts offer insights into the 'sex industry' and the people working in it. These texts offer a varied, and sometimes contradictory description of the work of prostitution. However, while descriptions of peoples' experiences are important, there is also room for trying to make sense of these and other stories. As Zatz (1997) suggests, there are so many different and often competing stories from 'sex industry' workers, that one

needs local and interpretative research if one is to avoid a 'theoretical paralysis' (Carpenter, 1990 cited in Jordan, 1992) in prostitution research.

In recent times, the experiential writings of sex workers has been joined by a public health based literature focusing on the issues of HIV and AIDS and the practices of at 'risk' groups. Specifically, prostitution has been linked to HIV and AIDS as a possible bridge through to the heterosexual population (Jenness, 1990). Much of the research is concerned with the safer sex knowledge and practices of sex workers (Chetwynd 1992, Woods, 1996). It also endeavours to take the emphasis away from research on sex workers per se, refocusing on those that make up 90% of the 'sex industry' - the 'client' (Plumridge et al, 1997a, 1997b, Jordan, 1997)

A Note on the Use of Language in this Thesis

In the majority of cases throughout this thesis I have used the term 'sex worker' to represent the men and women who sell sexual services for money through massage parlours, escort agencies and on the streets. I have used the terms sex worker because I support a move away from the value laden term 'prostitute' and because I believe that these men and women work very hard for their money. Nevertheless, I have occasionally used the word 'prostitute' to point out that there are substantial differences between the world of working in 'conventional' industries and that of working as sex workers/prostitutes in the 'sex industry'. Similarly, I refer throughout the thesis to the 'sex industry' which represents the collection of massage parlours, escort agencies and street workers in Christchurch. The term 'sex industry' remains in inverted commas throughout the thesis to draw attention to the fact that the industry is not a unified whole, but rather a dynamic entity constructed from the actions of a number of dispersed and disparate businesses, sex workers, and clients.

Using the Tools of Theory in Localised Research:

The Structure of the Thesis

In order to capture the complex dynamics of prostitution as the weaving together of sex and money through the interactions of networks of actors that come together to create prostitution markets, I have used and developed the ideas of Howard Becker (1982), Gary Allan Fine (1996) and Mark Granovetter (1986). These theoretical tools have been guides to understanding the interviews and the experiences of the research process.

In keeping with the interactionist traditions of Fine and Becker and the economic sociology of Granovetter, I have endeavoured to utilise the heterogeneous voices of sex workers, owners and managers in the 'sex industry' and embed their 'voices' within the network of organisations which constitute the 'sex industry'.

At the beginning of this research the issue which most concerned me was how to go about finding the people I wanted to interview. Chapter One describes my connection with the Christchurch branch of the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective, and its role as a form of research sponsor¹. I use this term sponsor, rather than key informant or gate keeper, because it helps to explain the reciprocity involved in the research process. The chapter also draws attention to the critical position of the NZPC, operating at the 'intersection' of activities between the 'sex industry' and the community, which enabled me to gain a richer and more dynamic understanding of the 'sex industry'.

Through out the entire thesis I have endeavoured to locate the activities of prostitution as taking place in specific times and spaces. I believe specific

¹ The concept of 'sponsor' refers to the way that I saw my relationship to the NZPC and does not in anyway mean that the NZPC contributed economic support to this study or even that they support all the finding of this thesis. Instead sponsor refers to the reciprocity of the research process, where research is a process of constant negotiation.

accounts of prostitution are better able to record and discuss the differences and nuances of these activities (Sullivan, 1995; Zatz, 1997). Through following and analysing concrete patterns of social interaction (Granovetter, 1986), one can offer alternatives which are of more use in social policy construction than generalised, universal discussions and claims about prostitution. Chapter Two explores some of the consequences of the Massage Parlours Act 1978. The chapter sets out how public policy attempts to regulate and control prostitution activities organised through the massage parlour, yet has had unintended consequences such as consolidating the position of massage parlours as prostitution outlets. The massage parlour operates somewhere between legally selling sex and illegally operating as a brothel. In this way, public policy constrains who can own, operate or work in massage parlours, while enabling massage parlours to operate in a licensed and more stable environment. This offered clients and sex workers a safe and comfortable space for sexual services while the clustering of sex businesses in the city allowed police closer supervision and monitoring of 'sex industry' practices. This has helped to shift police attention away from prosecution to one of gathering information on crime and 'criminals' whose activities cut across the 'sex industry'.

Chapter Three deals with the notion of ambiguous spaces and alternative locations for sexual services. Escort agencies combine elements of public commercialism, that are present in the massage parlour, with the private sexual services arranged in the client's personal home, hotel or motel rooms. The chapter sets out how escort agencies operate in contrast to the massage parlour, and how these services have shifted prostitution businesses into the suburbs. In these spaces, different forms of ownership have developed with escort agencies more often owned by women than men. The out-call service provided by escort agencies offers a more discreet and personal arrangement for clients. Escort work is an alternative form of employment for sex workers disillusioned with work in the massage parlour industry. This chapter

describes the expansion and diversification of the 'sex industry' into escort prostitution. The chapter also emphasises how the informal practices of the police can contribute to the consolidation of this new prostitution market.

Chapter Four examines how the economic transaction of purchasing sexual services is embedded in a complex set of social relations (Granovetter, 1986; Fine, 1996). The Chapter explores the positioning of the client-sex worker relationship in the production of commercial sexual services set in a competitive prostitution industry. In this setting I explore the strategies actually used by management to enrol the client as an informal method of control over sex workers. This operates in both massage parlours and the escort agencies through creating a quasi-freelance system for sex work where the sex worker must construct a more 'personal' relationship with the client in order to develop repeat custom. The chapter also examines forms of control used by the police to regulate sex workers - where the former utilises the ambiguous legal position held by the latter.

Organisations, networks of actors, and ambiguous spaces are central concepts in this thesis. These themes are further explored in Chapter Five which looks at the activities of the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective (NZPC). As the reader will learn, the NZPC has been central to the development and the understandings this thesis has achieved. Their ambiguous position - developing out of government funding and operating as a 'grass roots' community group for sex workers - has strongly altered public and 'sex industry' perceptions about prostitution. The NZPC have endeavoured to reframe prostitution as sex work, and prostitutes as sex workers. They have also worked towards reversing the discourses that link sex work with disease transmission, emphasising that sex workers are professional about safer sex. This chapter examines the ambiguous position held by a government-funded community group and how this position enables the NZPC to move among the various agendas of other government and non-government

groups in its quest to serve its own agenda of a safer, decriminalised 'sex industry' more effectively.

In conclusion to this thesis, the final chapter focuses on the importance of embedding the client-sex worker relationship in the wider activities of sex business, and the activities of the owners and managers who affect the way that sex work gets done. This chapter also emphasises the dynamic and changing nature of the 'sex industry'. It represents the industry as being contingent on the laws governing prostitution activities and the formal and informal practices of the police. These practices both constrain and provide opportunities to the different actors in the 'sex industry'. So too government concerns about the possible transmission of HIV and AIDS through prostitution and the consequent development of an organisation of sex workers has opened up further opportunities and constraints for the 'sex industry'.

CHAPTER ONE

DOING RESEARCH IN THE FIELD: THE NEW ZEALAND PROSTITUTES' COLLECTIVE¹ AS A FORM OF RESEARCH 'SPONSOR'

When I initially began thinking about writing a thesis on the organisation of prostitution, my main concern was first, whether being a man doing research in a predominantly female operated industry was going to be a problem? And second, would anyone from the 'sex industry' actually talk to me?

I wanted to speak with workers, receptionists, managers and owners of sex establishments. Despite an extensive literature on prostitution, very few people had written anything about owners and managers of sex businesses. Perhaps the reason was that these people would not talk to researchers? What I needed was a way in, a person or persons who knew their way about the field and could introduce me to the population I wanted to talk with (Whyte, 1981; Liebow, 1967).

The Christchurch branch of the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective (NZPC) was my first contact with the 'sex industry'. The NZPC is an organisation that deals with issues of sexual health and supports the rights of 'sex industry' personnel. The Collective developed in a complex way, out of government initiatives and sex workers' concerns with the perceived risk of the spread of HIV and AIDS in the 'sex industry'. The result was that the Government funded sex workers to organise collectively, offering safer sex education and support to 'sex industry' workers (Chetwynd, 1996). In this position, the Collective has become institutionalised as a spokesperson and advocate of, and within, the 'sex industry'. This organisation, jointly created

¹ Unless otherwise stated, the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective (NZPC) refers only to the Christchurch branch of the organisation.

by government funding and sex workers initiatives, has opened up a new brokerage system to the 'sex industry' for government, police, media, politicians and researchers, just as it has opened up new opportunities for sex workers to access these groups.

The NZPC offers researchers a different angle from which to view the 'sex industry'. The HIV and AIDS crisis, as it related to the 'sex industry', has pushed a raft of networks (some new, some old) to the surface for the researcher to think about and investigate. The ambiguous position that the NZPC navigates - as both government health provider and as a sex workers' rights organisation - potentially makes visible the networks of interaction which make up the 'sex industry'.

This chapter seeks to examine some of the methodological issues which emerged during the course of this thesis. It also seeks to orientate the reader to the ways in which the empirical work of interacting with people in the 'field(s)', as well as the theoretical and writing work of the academy have developed to inform the other.

This chapter begins by describing my initial entry into 'sex industry' worlds through my association with the NZPC. As my relationship with the Christchurch Coordinator of the NZPC and other members of the Collective developed, I found myself in the ambiguous position of feeling part of the group, yet feeling distanced because I lacked the actual experience of being a sex worker. The concept 'outsider within' has helped me make sense of my position.

The second section to this chapter deals with the concept of 'sponsorship' which has been useful in formulating an understanding of my research relationship with the NZPC. The concept of sponsorship gives the research process a dynamic dimension. I perceived the research process, which utilised the position and contacts of the NZPC, as one of negotiation and reciprocity rather than a one way process.

The third section represents the process by which I began to understand, and have defined, the research field. While the NZPC provided a wonderful opportunity for me to witness the many happenings and issues which passed through the organisation, in other ways, its political position identified who in the field I could talk with, as not everyone in the industry is sympathetic to the NZPC's beliefs and practices.

I then go on to talk briefly about the problems and benefits I found in being a man doing research in the 'sex industry'. Most significant was the focus of the interviews. Exploring issues of organisational and business practices was not as threatening or intimate in detail as discussions of the sexual service for instance.

Finally, I discuss the process of how I learned about the 'sex industry' through the people I spoke with, and how the network of people I interviewed developed out of a number of contacts and serendipitous events. In this way, the research process represents less a random sample of 'sex industry' personnel and more a developmental sample. Similarly, as my understanding of the industry expanded the interview questions developed, opening up new avenues to investigate further. In this way, I finally interviewed 27 people in many and varied locations around Christchurch.

Meeting the NZPC - and on being an 'Outsider Within'

In Christchurch, the staff of the Christchurch branch of the NZPC were familiar with university research through working with Ann Knight (1987), Jan Jordan (1991), and Bronwyn Lichtenstein (1996). Workers from the Collective had also given seminars and lectures at the university. They were therefore my obvious choice in finding people from the 'sex industry' to talk with.

Over the last two years I have spent most Friday nights socialising at the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective drop-in center on Lichfield Street in Christchurch. Friday nights have become institutionalised among those who

volunteer their time to the Collective, and for community members who want to maintain connections with the Collective or the 'sex industry'. As the Coordinator says:

"Many of the other people that come in on Friday nights are people I have met over the years and they are either from other organisations or researchers or just friends of mine. I think that it is a really important part of the Collective...It is just a good way of informal networking and I think that it works really well."

Initially, I began 'hanging out' on these Friday nights in order to make connections with sex workers, managers and owners of commercial sex businesses. However, these Friday nights at the NZPC provided the opportunity to develop my understanding of the 'sex industry' in another important way. Friday nights were a time to sit down with a wine and talk; as a result I would find out about the issues and happenings that had engaged the NZPC that week. Through this process, I began to build up an alternative picture of the 'sex industry' to the one that I had constructed from my reading.

Several months after I first met the Coordinator she suggested that myself and my partner move into her house. She needed flatmates, we needed a place to live. After talking with her about the possible problems involved in me doing research in the area and how I would manage the multiple relationships of friend, boarder and researcher, we agreed to move in. I had faith in our short friendship and our ability to talk through issues.

As the research progressed I became more of a regular at the NZPC. I began to feel a sense of being part of the group, being friends with everyone there; of being equally concerned about the happenings in the 'sex industry'; equally outraged at the treatment and stigma that sex workers so often faced; I became sympathetic to the aims of the group (Fine, 1992); I became an advocate of the NZPC's work and of the decriminalisation of the 'sex industry'; I began to internalise a "way of life" (Collins, 1984, p.61).

Nevertheless, I never felt as though I could truly be myself, nor freely offer my opinions, which may have differed from those commonly held by NZPC

members. Even though I was well acquainted with the issues of the 'sex industry' and accepted by the NZPC, I was still an *outsider*. I lacked the insider status of being either a sex worker or a woman. In this context, I have found the concept proposed by Patricia Hill Collins (cited in Pierce, 1995) of being the 'outsider within' a way of making sense of my position in the research process/field. This allows me to occupy a position that includes knowing much of the workings of the 'sex industry' and the law which regulates it - like those on the 'inside' of sex work - yet without having the experiential knowledge of actually being a sex worker. In taking this position, I agree with Pierce (1995) that the result "...sidestep(s) the insider-outsider debate by arguing that fieldworkers undertaking participant observation are neither insiders nor outsiders but rather, in the course of their research, assuming a role that is flexible, changing and quite complex"².

'Sponsorship' as a Methodological Issue

Researchers interested in studying the activities and interactions of a set of people need to enlist the help of some of those people and rely, at least initially, on their knowledge and access to get a "deep familiarity" (Goffman, 1989) with the interactions and events that are being studied. Sometimes, certain key people or organisations can become gatekeepers or sponsors through which the researcher is able to receive introductions to still further people and gain further understanding. In the case of doing research in the 'sex industry', the Christchurch branch of the NZPC became my 'sponsor'. I use the term 'sponsor', rather than gatekeeper or key informant because I believe it makes more plain the *relations of reciprocity* through which the research process is constructed and negotiated. Similarly, the term gatekeeper, while reflecting the predicament of access to the field, does not reflect the

² Also see Styles (1979), Gray (1980), and Collins (1984) for interesting discussions and variations on the insider/outsider debate.

continued process of negotiation that the researcher must involve themselves in to maintain access to that 'field'. I believe the concept of 'sponsor' gives agency to those who are *being* researched and makes more obvious the process of research as interactive.

For instance, on one occasion, I inadvertently offended a sex worker by asking too many questions about her work and her contact with the police. The events took place one Friday night over a couple of drinks in the Collective's social space. I didn't think too much about the conversation at the time, although I did write up some of the interesting things she was saying. However, the following week I was told that the woman had said that I had asked too many questions about 'working'. I spoke with the Coordinator about this and apologised for pushing the conversation too far and offending the woman. This incident made me aware of the tenuous position that I held in those early stages of gaining rapport. It is incidents like this which could have easily closed down my access to the 'sex industry'. Ultimately the NZPC is an organisation which supports, and needs the support of, sex workers. The NZPC should be a 'safe' space where sex workers are able to come and not be harassed by eager researchers. Fortunately, I was asked back, I was given friendship and introduced to people I later interviewed, but I could easily have not been. This was a lesson that I learned early on in the research process. As a postscript to this, I never saw the woman who I offended with my questions again on Friday nights, something that still worries me about my presence at the NZPC.

As an organisation largely operated by sex workers and in constant contact with many other sex workers, owners and managers, the NZPC was an excellent 'sponsor' to have. However, the NZPC is also an organisation which represents the sexual health interests and concerns of a stigmatised and socially discriminated against population. As a result, they hold strong political opinions and agendas. For this reason, my position as researcher was questioned: what area of the 'sex industry' did I want to research? What was I

hoping to say about it? How would I portray sex workers and the 'sex industry'? The NZPC had worked hard to raise the image of the 'sex industry', trying to decrease the levels of social harassment faced by sex workers, and to position prostitution as a legitimate form of work. They were not going to just 'roll over' and 'be researched'.

Some of these issues became plainly obvious when a representative from another branch of the NZPC came to visit Christchurch and spoke with me at length about what I wanted to do, what I was going to say and how I was going to say it. She was concerned about safeguarding the image of the 'sex industry' from further harm from researchers. As Nickie Roberts (1992, p.xi) writes, "The thought occurred to me that if prostitution truly is the world's oldest profession, then men writing about it is certainly the second oldest". Initially, I was shocked out of my 'objective researcher naivety', coming to realise that I was doing research through a highly politicised organisation and that they had agendas also. If I could contribute to their work in a useful way, well and good, but if I was potentially going to be detrimental, I would have to be monitored. I must have remained looking shocked because in parting, she joked: "Don't worry Peter, there isn't really a prostitutes' Mafia on researchers"³. As I moved further along the research/writing stage, I began to realise that the NZPC faced a difficult task ensuring the sexual health and safety of 'sex industry' personnel. Part of this entailed monitoring who was writing about them and what was being written. In the writing of this thesis, I have been acutely aware of a 'sense of responsibility' to the NZPC and 'sex industry' personnel to help effect beneficial change, and to produce a thesis (which would be given to the NZPC) that would be accessible and understandable to the wide range of people in the 'sex industry'. However, at the same time I also have a responsibility as a sociologist to present academic

³ See Anonymous (1996) for another interesting view of the research process.

work which is an honest and accurate representation of my interpretation of the 'sex industry'.

In the Field

The ethnographic 'field' is not unproblematic, not a neutral, merely normative term (Berger, 1993). My own understanding of the 'field' (Katz, 1994) was being guided by those to whom the Christchurch branch of the NZPC could get me introductions. The fact that the NZPC is not accepted by everyone involved in commercial sex operations made me reflect back on whom I had been talking to, and how this was affecting the way I had been thinking about the 'sex industry'. This represents the way that the 'construction of knowledge' in ethnographic work is enabled and constrained by those through whom the researcher seeks access to other worlds.

As Jane Fountain (1993, p.151) suggests from her experience in doing ethnographic research on the cultures of drug dealing:

"Any member could have been my gatekeeper to a different branch of it: in the extreme case, if the first co-operative dealer I had met had been an unemployed Hell's Angel, living in a squat, then I would probably have been researching a different group of people with a different culture..."⁴

For example, there are several parlour owners in town that do not support the work of the Christchurch branch of the NZPC because of disputes or

⁴ Van Der Poel (1992) points to some of the issues raised in the research process through the changing definition of the male prostitute and the population from which those men are sampled. He suggests that up to the 1970s male prostitutes were seen in terms of criminality or mental disturbance and researchers drew samples from those institutions. During the 1970s male prostitution was seen more as juvenile prostitution and a social problem; this brought welfare agencies into the picture and supplied researchers with another sample population. Similarly, other researchers began to locate male prostitution with the 'homo-subculture' which brought still other populations into the research focus.

because they do not believe in a sex workers' rights organisation. When I first went to talk with the Collective Coordinator about doing research, she said:

"Some of the better owners will talk to you, but the other ones probably won't. That's a shame because they have quite a different view of the industry than we do".

I didn't realise the significance of this at the time. However, when I interviewed some of these 'other' people independently from the NZPC through other 'sex industry' contacts, I distanced myself from close associations with the Prostitutes' Collective by staying clear of the subject and when the subject did arise by playing down my relationship with them. Michael Brown has pointed out the irony of distance in ethnographic projects where the researcher must distance themselves from one group in order to gain access to another group (Brown, 1995). Doing so however, allowed me to overcome some of the limits that would otherwise have been imposed by the NZPC's networks.

As I will outline in chapter five, the NZPC occupies an ambiguous space between state funded health provider and sex workers' rights organisation - it is this ambiguity which has at once created new networks and made plain established ones. The NZPC operates among and between networks which intersect many other independent and overlapping networks - dealing with the Regional Health Authorities, the health related concerns of sex workers, negotiating with owners and managers, dealing with the police, public health researchers, Inland Revenue, and Social Welfare Departments. However the 'sex industry' is generally not conceived of as the multiple, dynamic network of interactions and negotiations that it actually is. In this research, it has been the space occupied by the NZPC that has made more obvious the complexity of interactions and the networks of people that intersect with this organisation. Thus, doing research through organisations such as the NZPC, gives researchers the potential to push new angles through which to think and theorise about the activities of the organisation of prostitution.

In this section I have endeavoured to show how the NZPC presented my research with certain constraints, in terms of ways of talking about the 'sex industry', and about whom it enabled me to contact, yet most importantly, how it also enabled me to think about the 'field' in new ways. As a researcher, the NZPC allowed me to witness, and interact with, the operations and problems of sex work at the intersection of 'sex industry' actors. Being connected to the NZPC I was able to witness many more of the comings and goings, tensions and disputes than one would through a random sample of interviews with employers and employees in the industry. This view informed my theoretical conceptualisation of the 'sex industry' as the interaction and intersection of heterogeneous networks of actors involved in operating 'sex industry' businesses.

Of the Second Oldest Profession: On being a Male Researcher

The researcher can never escape the implications of gender, but especially in 'sex industry' research, no genderless neutrality can be achieved (McKeganey and Bloor, 1991). In retrospect, I entered into research in the 'sex industry' rather naively. I was taking a great risk entering into a research domain I understood to be almost exclusively comprised of women workers and managers, and where men hanging around the 'sex industry' are more often clients. Other researchers in the last few years in Christchurch have been women researching 'sex industry' issues (Jordan, 1991; Knight, 1987).

However, in many ways being a man was also an advantage; I did not want to talk about the intimate details of people's life histories (Jordan, 1991) nor about the exact nature of sex work (Knight, 1987); nor did I want to talk specifically about the use of safer sex equipment (Chetwynd, 1992). I wanted to talk about how sex workers 'did' work, about how managers managed, and about how owners went about owning 'sex industry' businesses. These issues were far less intimate in detail, and not issues that transcend the 'masculine boundaries' of everyday interaction. Talking to workers, managers and

owners about doing business was more in keeping with my 'masculine role' and more in keeping with a view of the 'sex industry' as a form of business and of work.

Secondly, the women with whom I spoke had vast experience in dealing with men far more problematic than myself. The literature about the 'sex industry' generally emphasises that the sex worker has control over the male client in the sex work situation (Plumridge, et al, 1997b). The women I interviewed were very strong-willed and independent and very open to talking about their work. These women were good at dealing with men. They were not going to be intimidated by an apologetic 'SNAG' sociologist like myself. If they had not wanted to answer the questions or not wanted to talk to me, they would simply have refused to do so.

However, being a man visiting massage parlours and escort agencies did have its interesting and embarrassing moments. I visited one escort agency where the manager said that "every man that comes in here is a potential client". She asked whether I would be interested in "going through with one of the lovely ladies". I blushed and refused.

Through another experience, this time in a massage parlour, I began to realise my 'sexualised position' in the research process (this incident reinforced for me that these businesses were very much sites of sex): One worker asked me; "What does your partner think of you hanging around brothels all day talking to prostitutes". This question caught me by surprise. I had been so absorbed in the abstraction of business organisation and management relations, that I had not fully grasped that these were places where sex took place. I had not realise my own sexualised role in the research process. Was I just another 'walking wallet' to some of the people I spoke with?

Still more Methodological Issues: Constructing the Research Field

In my research of the 'sex industry' in Christchurch, I did not use a random sample of 'sex industry' personnel to construct the research field. This would have been an appropriate method of research to employ if my object had been to find out, for example, who worked in the 'sex industry' and their defining attributes (although difficult to operationalise). Instead my problem was to explore how particular complex sex worlds (the 'sex industry') are constructed out of actors in social networks. When I began I had little real understanding of the 'sex industry', nor of the exact direction that I wanted the research to develop. Nevertheless, I knew that I wanted to focus on the operations of sex businesses. That meant I needed to locate owners and managers of those businesses, as well as those employed in them. It also meant I had to talk to the police, newspaper representatives and others who in one way or another were involved in the industry. To this end, I embarked on a mission to talk to as many 'variously located' people as I could about the 'sex industry'.

Nevertheless, I didn't really know what I was looking for, nor what I was going to find. Consequently, I used the interviews as a way of progressively finding out about the organisation of sex businesses. As the number and variety of interviews increased, my understanding of the industry increased. With each new interview I would endeavour to push angles that had developed from it and probe issues further - often asking for examples of how certain events unfolded.

As I have previously mentioned, my first contact with 'sex industry' personnel was through going along to the NZPC and talking with the local Coordinator. It was her own experience of being involved with the 'sex industry' for eighteen years and her position in the NZPC that enabled me to interview people from all branches of the industry and at all occupational levels of sex businesses.

I began by interviewing those members of the Collective willing to talk with me about their experiences of working in the industry - how did they first get

involved? What was their idea of a good sex business? What were their interactions with other workers and clients? From these interviews I developed an idea of the industry structured around work practices, routines, and economics.

I knew that I wanted to talk with owners and managers, and I knew this might be very difficult. However, from my friendships with the people at the NZPC I got some introductions to managers. Often Friday nights developed as a good place to meet with people who I would later interview.

On one such Friday night, the driver of an escort agency came in and had a drink with us. I was introduced to him and he said he would talk to his boss who owned the escort agency to see if I could come and talk with her. This developed into a wonderful opportunity to 'hang out' at the escort agency premises - talking and observing many of the everyday practices. This moved my understanding of the industry into the realm of how people go about owning and managing sex businesses, how selling the sexual service to the client is an important part of these businesses, and how regular clients need to be fostered and maintained by both the business and the sex workers.

So too, the NZPC Christmas party proved a good place to make contacts. At one party, I met two owners and a manager who I was later to interview. Most of the owners I interviewed had totally different perspective of the industry from one another. For one owner, the industry was all about doing deals with people and getting the clients in and out as soon as possible. Other owners were more involved with catering to niche markets where the standard of service was very high and where disciplined workers were important.

Slowly, I developed certain understandings about the practices of the 'sex industry'. I no longer saw it as a monolithic structure. Instead the 'sex industry' emerged as a number of different 'sex industry' entrepreneurs and sex workers with multiple experiences, operating out of a number of disparate business environments.

Still other times and events which shaped my understandings of the 'sex industry' were those serendipitous occasions when I happened to be visiting the NZPC as particular events were actually unfolding or being dealt with on the premises. In this way, I got to witness many of these happenings first hand. For instance, one afternoon I popped in when the people from the Inland Revenue Department were visiting, talking with people at the Collective and dropping off pamphlets about taxation and sex work. As a result, the story which I recount in Chapter Five came out. Similarly, on another occasion, I was visiting the Collective as an NZPC representative was dealing with a worker who had been defrauded of several hundred of dollars by the owner of the massage parlour (see Chapter Five). From such opportunities I was able to gain a wide range of information, and develop a more eclectic understanding of the interactions of the 'sex industry' with the wider community.

However, not everyone I interviewed had connections to the NZPC. In my everyday life at university I often found myself talking to people who knew others that were connected to the industry in some way. On one such occasion, I was introduced to two sex workers, one male and one female, through a good friend. These two workers offered still further insights into the 'sex industry' from a perspective not associated with the NZPC. It was one of these interviews which presented a very negative view of sex work, one of drugs, alcohol use, and exploitative and violent male owners. Up to this point I had been exposed to reasonably positive experiences of sex work from interviewing sex workers at the NZPC. The negative experiences of this woman deeply affected me - but helped me develop a better picture of the many different people involved in the industry and their multiple experiences of 'working'.

On another occasion, a friend helped me make contact with the concierge manager at a major Christchurch hotel. Interviews with escorts had revealed that sex work practices often involved going to hotels and motels in the city;

this raised a whole raft of questions for the thesis surrounding the interactions that have developed between sex workers, clients and hotel employees.

On still other occasions, I rang up particular people I had heard about but to whom I could not get introductions. It was not difficult finding the telephone numbers of people or businesses with whom I wanted to talk. The 'sex industry' is at once a private discreet group of businesses and sex workers going about their work, and a group of commercial enterprises which needs to attract clients through publicly advertising their businesses.

In these cases owners had different ways of dealing with me, often extracting maximum information so skilfully that in some cases I would get off the phone not knowing whether I had even spoken to the person I had asked to talk with. At other times, I would ring up to talk to the owner or manager and be told politely, but forthrightly, that this was an industry which you didn't talk to people about. Still other telephone calls developed into impromptu interviews over the phone⁵. Nevertheless, one call did develop into a face-to-face interview with an owner of a massage parlour. This proved very useful because he had been in the industry for 20 years and had a wealth of interesting material to share. However, he did not have very much time and did not want to be tape recorded. Subsequent attempts to re-interview him failed.

A very important part of this research was interviewing the police who had dealings with the 'sex industry'. In Christchurch, there was only one detective involved. However, contacting the police, after extensive interviews with sex workers, owners and managers of sex businesses, presented itself as problematic. I was concerned that it would reflect badly on me if I had been seen/known to have been talking to the police. In many ways I felt I was being

⁵ With the recent increase in escort agencies and people operating businesses from home, interviewing people over the telephone would be a very good and successful research technique.

paranoid, but given the police interest in gaining any information they can, perhaps my apprehension was justified.

Nevertheless, the police perspective on the industry developed into a very important part of the thesis, and for my eventual understanding of the 'sex industry'. The detective was open about his lack of respect for 'sex industry' laws. From his point of view, he wanted to see tighter controls on prostitution activities. Interviews with him resulted in a better perception of how police gather intelligence through their connections in the 'sex industry', and the operations of organised 'criminal gangs' and 'notorious criminals' and their role as financiers which in some cases cut across the 'sex industry'.

To summarise, the interview process in this research has not been a random sample of 'sex industry' personnel, nor were the questions I asked standardised for all my interviews. Instead, the interviews operated to give me a better understanding of the industry and provided me with angles to push and events to probe. In a similar way, even though I was always going to interview owners and managers of sex businesses as well as sex workers, what came out of the interviews helped determine the different people I would eventually interview.

Therefore, in the process of researching the 'sex industry', I conducted twenty seven semi-structured interviews with twenty one people: four owners of sex businesses, three from massage parlours and one from an escort agency; four managers, two from massage parlours and two from escort agencies; six sex workers, four women and two men, three of whom were from massage parlours and three of whom were from escort agencies; one lawyer; three police detectives; one taxi driver; a representative from the Social Welfare benefit fraud squad; one hotel manager. The interviews lasted between forty five minutes and one and a half hours each. Some people I interviewed more than once. Interviews took place in a number of different settings; in cafes, in the botanical gardens, in peoples houses, in massage parlours, in escort agencies, and in police interviewing rooms. It was difficult finding private, yet

still public, space to interview sex workers. Often, meeting in cafés or walking in the botanical gardens was the best way of organising things. However, cafes were often noisy and not private, and the weather was not always conducive to interviews outside.

One of the interesting things about interviewing was asking people if I could tape record what they were going to say. I always explained to people before the interview what my research was about, that everything they said would be anonymous in the text, and that I would endeavour to conceal events or people that could be recognised⁶. Almost all the 'sex industry' personnel, with the exception of two male owners, agreed to the interviews being tape recorded. Yet some of those who were not directly involved in 'sex industry' activities refused to be tape recorded. It is interesting that those who seemed to have the most to lose ('sex industry' personnel) from tape recorded interviews were the most trusting (or least worried) and that those in other occupations, such as the police detectives in Auckland or the concierge manager, were distinctly mistrustful.

With the interviews in the massage parlours and escort agencies, I got a glimpse of what it feels like to be a client. I felt very self conscious entering the massage parlours from busy streets. I could feel peoples' eyes on me. I knew that I was going in as a social researcher with organisational practice on my mind and not 'prurient' thoughts, but those people staring at me did not. Even once I got into the parlours and approached the receptionist - for a few seconds she looked at me like I was just another client - I was usually quick to state my business and differentiate myself from my 'potential' client status.

On one occasion, I had 15 minutes to wait in a massage parlour for the manager to return, in which time I had two women look after me, getting me a

⁶ At one stage in the research - when I was going to piece together a recent history of the 'sex industry' - I thought a contemporary history would be problematic without any names mentioned and with significant events altered to protect peoples identities. Perhaps this is why there is little specific contemporary history (1920-1990s) of the 'sex industry' written.

cup of coffee, taking my coat, talking with me. It was a very relaxing environment - I probably looked very nervous, perhaps the way some clients look, but they were very good at putting me at ease. This could have just been politeness and good manners, or it could have been the extension of the manager's statement that "every man that enters this house is a potential client".

Concluding Remarks

In the process of doing research on the 'sex industry' in Christchurch, I learnt about the industry from two main sources: being closely associated with the NZPC enabled me to talk informally with staff and 'sex industry' workers at the drop-in center, as well as through semi-structured interviews with owners, managers, workers of the 'sex industry' and others such as the police and Department of Social Welfare representatives.

Initially, I didn't appreciate the central position of the NZPC and the amount of information this gave me access to about the industry. Observing the people who passed through the NZPC and the events that occurred there helped me frame my thinking about the 'sex industry' and make sense of the issues and themes which were coming out of my interviews. The NZPC, at first, was simply a way of accessing people to talk with in the 'sex industry'; however they soon became central to the way I came to conceptualise the industry, and eventually write about it in this thesis.

In this discussion I have endeavoured to highlight the reciprocity/interaction of the research process through employing the term 'sponsor'. Doing research with the NZPC as my 'sponsor' has allowed me access to owners, managers and workers whom I would otherwise have found difficult to meet. However, access to the 'sex industry' through this path was still only 'partial'. At other times I had to make my own connections without the assistance of the NZPC. These people gave me yet another view of the industry. What developed was not a random sample of the different levels of the 'sex industry', but an

exploration of issues and events which developed from the people I met, the events I witnessed, and the interviews I completed. The result is a particular form of understanding of the 'sex industry' in Christchurch.

CHAPTER TWO

CITY SEX MARKETS: SOME CONSEQUENCES OF THE MASSAGE PARLOURS ACT 1978

In June 1995, newspaper headlines proclaimed Christchurch the 'Sleaze City' of New Zealand ("Sleazy Label Rejected", Christchurch Star, 24:6:1995). It was the signs and murals depicting nude and salacious images of women to advertise central city massage parlours that created the stir. These conspicuous public images of prostitution were what originally attracted my attention to the industry. In walking around the Manchester Street and Lichfield Street areas, one is struck by the street level visibility of commercial sex businesses, and the popularity of the massage parlour as its organisational form. These prominent symbols of prostitution sat uneasily with my conception of the 'sex industry' as largely illegal, and therefore clandestine. In fact, as I was to find out, the massage parlour occupies an ambiguous space between legally selling sex, and illegally operating as a brothel.

In this chapter, I will argue that the massage parlour has developed through a complex interplay between 'sex industry' innovators and the laws governing prostitution in New Zealand prior to 1978. It was this form of organising commercial sex in the city which was characterised by the police, and the National Government of the time, as synonymous with drug dealing, organised crime and the exploitation of women. In order to increase police regulation and control over this form of selling sex, the government developed the Massage Parlours Act 1978. This statute licensed owners and managers and registered sex workers who were free from certain criminal convictions, thus regulating who could own, manage and work as a masseuse (sex worker) in these businesses.

These developments have had both intended and unintended consequences for the actors concerned. Firstly, licensing owners did not completely rid the 'sex industry' of 'criminals', in some cases it developed new spaces for them as financiers of sex businesses. The Massage Parlours Act 1978 created the opportunity for the massage parlour to exist as a quasi-legal business, yet traditional financial channels such as banks were closed to these businesses because they were seen to be operating as brothels. In this way, 'criminal entrepreneurs' and 'organised crime' have, according to the police, maintained a space in the new massage parlour industry providing finance to sex businesses. Secondly, the massage parlour provided an organisational structure to commercial sex which reduced any need for the figure of the 'pimp' (although some sex business owners still exploit their workers through either sexual or economic means). Thirdly, the massage parlour, operated by licensed owners and managers and employing registered masseuses (sex workers), has woven a path between the laws and their enforcement to develop as an institutionalised form of organising commercial sex which dominated the sex-on-site scene in Christchurch during the 1980s.

As an institutionalised form of commercial sex, located in the central city and clustered around the Manchester Street area, massage parlours provide a number of benefits for clients, sex workers, and the police. Both clients and sex workers benefit from an organisation of sex work which furnishes, in most cases, a safe, comfortable, and private environment where economic and sexual transactions can take place. The sex business operates as a third party or broker between the client and the sex worker. The client benefits from the massage parlour by having a fixed and discreet location where he can be guaranteed sexual services. The sex worker benefits from the massage parlour by having an organisational form which facilitates more regular work. The business also operates to attract clients to the premises - sex workers do not have to attract clients by standing on the streets - and offers sex workers some form of protection from violent clients.

The massage parlour benefits police by concentrating 'sex industry' personnel in one business, and clustering sex businesses in specific areas of the central city. This accessibility of 'sex industry' personnel, coupled with the registration of owners, managers and workers, has increasingly shifted police work away from a prosecution role. The police have begun instead to use 'sex industry' personnel as a means of gathering intelligence on crime and 'notorious criminals' whose activities occasionally cut across the 'sex industry'. Police gather information through befriending 'sex industry' personnel and developing trusting relationships with some. The police can also operate by bartering, using 'favours' to glean certain information. Furthermore, police can exploit the legally ambiguous position held by 'sex industry' personnel to gain information through the threat of prosecution or investigation from other government departments such as the Inland Revenue and Social Welfare Departments.

The Massage Parlours Act 1978 benefits the police by constructing a boundary around the 'sex industry' which can be monitored. While activities in the parlours are reasonably discreet, sex work on the streets has the potential to offend public sensibilities, and therefore requires more policing. If massage parlour practitioners push the boundaries of the law too far, however, the police will prosecute them for such things as selling alcohol, or employing underage workers or illegal immigrants.

This chapter endeavours to pull together relationships between 'sex industry' innovators, the law and police practices in order to characterise the development of the 'sex industry' as a complex inter-weaving of different actors and the laws governing the activities of prostitution. Through examining these relationships (see Frey et al., 1981; Dimaggio, 1977; Granovetter, 1986), the chapter argues that the co-operative activities of those involved in the 'sex industry' are both constrained and enabled by the intended and unintended consequences flowing from forms of legal regulation.

Early Beginnings of the Massage Parlour

"The early 1970's sex industry in Christchurch consisted of 34 massage parlours. Many just had a bowl where they would wash you and a mattress on the floor. One place had a sauna, which was a Conray heater with rocks around it" (massage parlour owner).

Since the early 1970s, massage parlours have developed as a way of organising commercial sex. While knowledge about the specific origins of parlour formation in New Zealand remains sketchy, Roberta Perkins (1991) has argued that the massage parlour was probably introduced into Sydney in the late 1960s from the American West Coast. Essentially, the organisational form allows a brothel to be disguised as a massage clinic in order to avoid laws against sex businesses. Bryant and Palmer (1975) suggest that this particular combination of massage and commercial sex was particularly common in Vietnam, where servicemen encountered the massage parlour while on 'Rest and Recuperation' leave during the Vietnam War. Whatever its origins, commentators have noted the decline of the brothel and the introduction of the massage parlour into American and Australian commercial sex scenes during the late 1960s and 1970s (Adler, 1975, Bryant and Palmer 1975, Gilfoyle, 1996 and Perkins, 1991).

Similarly, in New Zealand the massage parlour developed as an organisational strategy to operate commercial sex within or between the laws governing prostitution related activities. While the current laws do not prohibit prostitution per se, Brothel Keeping (s.147, Crimes Act 1961), Living on Earnings of Prostitution (s. 148, Crimes Act 1961), Procuring Sexual Intercourse (s.149, Crimes Act 1961), and Soliciting (s.26, Summary Offences Act 1981) are criminal offences. The massage parlour technically complies with this legislation by selling the client *massage time* only. The sex worker, or masseuse, then negotiates with the client in the privacy of a parlour room for any sexual services that are required. The client in most cases has to ask

for sex. Nevertheless, the sex worker must take care not to directly tell the client how much each service will cost him because soliciting in a public place (a massage parlour is a public place) is an illegal act. Sex workers have different methods of informing the client of the prices; at one massage parlour they have a menu of prices that the sex worker can show the client, which uses such euphemistic terms as 'tunnel of love massage', 'lip massage', and so forth.

The massage parlour is an organisational strategy that operates amongst and between legal regulations concerning brothel keeping - laws which were designed to prohibit the activities of pimps. Under these conditions, owners and managers of massage parlours must never admit to the client that anything other than a massage can be purchased. While these legal restrictions have constrained how sex is sold, they have also offered opportunities to innovators. As a massage parlour owner with over 20 years experience told me:

"I started off in the night club scene in Sydney in the early seventies. I made a lot of money, learnt a lot and had a good time....When I came back to New Zealand the (sex) industry was just getting going, it was pretty unsophisticated...many of the things that are standard practice in parlours now I initiated...like showers in every room..."

Crafting Control: The Development of the Massage Parlours Act 1978

The Massage Parlours Act 1978 developed in a climate of increasing insecurity for the New Zealand public. There were fears about traditional forms of crime, as well as the rise of new forms of organised crime connected to drug smuggling and dealing, which had provided opportunities for complex hierarchies of pedlars, couriers and 'Mister Bigs' (Eldred Grigg, 1982).

In 1978 there were approximately 100 massage parlours operating in New Zealand (Mr T. J. Young, New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD) 418: 1978, p.1184) with, it was claimed, 75 percent of them operating as fronts for brothels (Mr Prebble, NZPD 418:1978, p.1185). As reported in the NZPD (1978: 418), the National Government and the police wanted to 'clean up' the massage parlour businesses. They believed massage parlours were

exploitative of young women who were being used as prostitutes, and they suspected parlours were being operated by organised criminals who were using them as clearing houses for drug dealing.

The existing laws criminalising brothel keeping, procuring, and living on earnings of prostitution were obviously not impeding prostitution related activities. In the parliamentary debates, however, there was little talk of prohibiting prostitution. In the 1970s, governments in New Zealand and elsewhere began experimenting with new ways of treating prostitution, generally moving towards less punitive models of legislation (Frances 1994, p.47). The Massage Parlours Act 1978 was not designed to prohibit massage parlours, but to give the police more power to control who could own, operate and work in them. As Mr McLay states in his summary of the Massage Parlour Bill in Parliament:

“...the Bill is designed to prevent organised criminal incursions into prostitution, which there is good reason to believe is now occurring in some massage parlours. It is for this reason, and this reason alone, that the Bill has been introduced. The situation is to be controlled by a licensing system that allows the police to have considerable influence in determining who should be licensed to operate a massage parlour and who should be approved to manage such an institution” (Mr McLay, NZPD:418:1978, p. 1686).

The Massage Parlours Act 1978 then, gave police the discretion to choose who could own, operate and work in massage parlours. In order to get a licence to operate a massage parlour, owners were ‘checked out’ for convictions relating to prostitution (s.147-149, Crimes Act 1961), or drugs related offences (Narcotics Act 1965 or the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975). The previous cancellation of a massage parlour license is also checked (s.5-16, Massage Parlours Act 1978). The police have the power *not* to endorse a licence application to the court if they have reason to suspect that the applicant is of ‘unsound character’ or associates with people of ‘unsound character’ (police detective, Christchurch). If the applicant is endorsed by the police and approved by the court, and pays the court the \$550 annual fee, the massage parlour licence will be granted.

Similarly, the Act requires that managers, free from the same convictions as licence holders and of 'good character', be present during the hours of business when the licensee is not present. In Christchurch most of the managers of massage parlours are women¹. The court collects \$350 for the first managers licence, and \$150 per annum thereafter.

Masseuses employed by the massage parlour must also be free from drug or prostitution related convictions under the legislation. A register of true names, addresses, and ages (s.18, Massage Parlours Act 1978, restricts the minimum age of a masseuse in a massage parlour to 18 years of age) must be kept at the massage parlour for police inspection (s.19, Massage Parlours Act 1978).

The Massage Parlours Act 1978 marks a move by the state away from trying to stop prostitution altogether, adding to the existing legislation a licensing system based on regulation and control. As Mr McLay states in the second reading of the Massage Parlour Bill:

"...the Bill seeks to control. If you license, you control. If you give the police the power to enter, you control. If you give the police the power to object to licenses, you control. If you give the police the power to object to employees, you control. If those who have been convicted of drug and prostitution offences in the last 10 years cannot work in massage parlours, you control" (NZPD:418:1978, p. 1689).

The actions of government and police in developing the Massage Parlours Act 1978 implemented a strategy for regulating who can own and work in the city massage parlours. Read this way, their actions operated in commercial sex markets to both restrict prostitution activities, while also offering some the opportunity to, in fact, sell sex under license from the government.

One massage parlour owner, who had been in the business for twenty years, told me that soon after the Massage Parlours Act 1978 was introduced the

¹ Owners have told me that women managers are better for business as they are more attractive to the clients. They are often ex sex workers, and so they know how the business operates. The irony, as one manager spelt out, is that the manager's position requires her to ensure that acts of prostitution do not occur on the premises.

number of commercial sex businesses dropped from 34 down to 9 businesses in Christchurch. I do not know, however, whether this was a consequence of the police restricting massage parlour licences, or whether owners simply consolidated their small sex operations, opening larger and more sophisticated licensed massage parlours.

In summary then, the massage parlour developed out of the ambiguous laws governing the organisation of prostitution, and the Act was a state/police move to regulate activities in massage parlours. Prior to the Act, parlours had progressively come to be seen both as exploitative of young women enlisted as prostitutes, and attractive to 'organised criminals' dealing in drugs. Through the Act, the state/police utilised existing networks and alliances between commercial sex operators, sex workers and clients - organised around the massage parlour - to contain and control this population. This legislation can therefore be seen as a form of state intervention in the management of prostitution markets, with the police as the gatekeepers to owning and working in the 'sex industry'. The implementation and enforcement of the Act has had a number of unintended consequences, however.

Some of the Consequences of the Massage Parlours Act 1978

Doing Sex Business: The Problems of Financial Support

Commercial sex, organised through the massage parlour, constitutes a hybrid form of operation poised uneasily between legal and illegal business (Harding and Jenkins, 1989; O'Higgins, 1983). The Massage Parlours Act 1978 institutionalises ways that private operators and sex workers can cooperate with some 'legal' security in the provision of sexual services. Because the parlour sells the client a massage only, with sexual service being negotiated in private² between the client and the sex worker at a later stage,

² The private room in the massage parlour is still classed as a public space (Massage Parlours Act 1978) and as such sex workers can be charged with soliciting in the massage parlour.

the business becomes a way that prostitution can be organised without openly breaching the laws against Brothel Keeping, Procuring and Living on Earnings of Prostitution (s.147, s.148., s.149, Crimes Act 1961).

While organising prostitution through massage parlours has provided some opportunities to operate under a licensed and legal system through state legislation, its operations are treated with indifference by financial institutions such as banks³. Yet all commercial enterprises need finance to establish their premises, and for the continued successful operation of their business. This raises the issue of how and where sex businesses gain access to sufficient finance needed to develop and maintain the large massage parlours operating in the city.

One owner of an 'up-market' massage parlour told me that the development cost of her parlour rose from \$80 000 to \$120 000 through to \$180 000 at its completion. Even in less well equipped parlours, the initial costs of establishing an operational massage parlour are quite high. Installing showers, beds, and settees in every room, carpeting the premises, creating office space, and painting and decorating require a great deal of money. The ongoing overheads were estimated by one massage parlour owner as ranging from \$1000 through to \$5000 per month. This makes the problem of financial support crucial to the success and continuation of any sex business.

For many in the massage parlour industry, the normal financial routes are blocked because of the uncertain legality and social stigma attached to owning and operating commercial sex ventures. A massage parlour owner complained to me about double standards of his bank and the problems he had getting finance:

"I had been a BNZ customer for years but do you think they would give me a loan? 'No way' he said, 'we won't lend you money because we don't want our bank associated with massage parlours'".

³ According to owners of sex businesses it is also virtually impossible to get any form of insurance in New Zealand for massage parlours.

So while commercial sex businesses are integrated into aspects of the economic and social business communities of the city, they are likely to be locked out of official financial channels. In this way, the quasi-illegal status of commercial sex, coupled with the social stigma attached to those who organise it, have maintained spaces in a regulated and controlled massage parlour industry for 'criminal entrepreneurs', and 'organised criminal' groups, to act as financiers.

The Christchurch police have suggested that while there are few organised crime syndicates (generally gangs) which have direct control of massage parlours in Christchurch, there are some that have financial interests (police detective, Christchurch). In Christchurch they say there are some massage parlours owned or substantially financed by entrepreneurs with links to 'organised crime'⁴. Financing massage parlours offers alternative opportunities to those with criminal convictions who, subject to police veto on licences, can no longer collect revenue from their businesses. In such cases, a 'front person' who is eligible for a massage parlour licence is officially named as the parlour owner. Ostensibly, this system removes the gang or criminal further from the parlour, and further from prosecution. The police detective talks about his perceptions of this process:

"When the Act first came in they had a problem with gangs and notorious criminals coming in and becoming licensees. So what the Act did is remove those people from the actual license of the parlour, but they are still the financiers of the parlour, they just put front people in. So all they have done is removed themselves one back now".

⁴ The clandestine nature of these activities makes factual claims about the amount of 'criminal' involvement in the sex industry impossible to gauge. I have developed the argument of 'criminal financial support' mainly from interviews with the police in Christchurch and their interpretation of the relationships involved. This is in no way representative of the New Zealand sex industry.

While the Massage Parlours Act 1978 licensing system was designed to stop the involvement of certain individuals, the unintended consequences of it have been to push 'criminal' financiers further out of police reach.

Massage parlours, apart from generating revenue for criminals, can operate as businesses for laundering money. Crime is not endemic to massage parlours, but does cut across them:

"There are probably two or three dominant parlours in town where stolen goods and drugs are coming in and going out. Not as much as what it was, but it is still happening. Only two or three that I know of that is..." (police detective, Christchurch).

"Gangs were also heavily involved in prostitution. Detective Neale said female gang associates were in most parlours, escort agencies, and not the streets" (Taylor, 1997, p3).

Representatives from the Auckland police also suggested that crime cuts across massage parlours:

"Brothels are very much networking places, from petty criminals to organised crime (gangs); many have relations with parlours through finance, friends or girlfriends, and they will do business through them." (Auckland police detectives)

Massage Parlours Operating to Restrict the 'Pimp'

As I have argued in the previous section, the Massage Parlours Act 1978 opened up spaces for the organisation of sex under licence. This offered spaces for criminal entrepreneurs and organised criminal groups to remove themselves from the direct ownership of sex businesses, moving instead to roles as financiers. Seen in this way, the massage parlour allows owners to operate without being brothel keepers or 'pimps', and at the same time it reduce the need for traditional style 'pimps'.

In New Zealand the image of the 'pimp' as the exploitative and violent male who operates a harem of young women who prostitute themselves (for love) to supply him with money (Milner and Milner, 1973) is not common. The infrequent occurrence of this style of 'pimp' in the commercial 'sex industry' is related to the organisational style of prostitution operated through the

massage parlour (Rosen, 1982). Owners and managers have taken over many of the functions of the 'pimp': they operate as brokers between the sex worker and the client; they offer protection for both parties; and they advertise the sex workers' presence through clustering in the central city, as well as advertising in the Yellow Pages and in the local newspapers. In many ways, the popularity of the massage parlour as the main form of commercial sex has reduced the need for, or use of, the traditional style 'pimp' in the industry.

However, as competition rises in the 'sex industry', some women are turning to street work to avoid the brokerage charges of the commercial sex owner. As this happens, more men can be seen operating to protect street sex workers. These are less likely to be professional 'pimps' however, and more likely to be those Perkins (1991) describes as 'sitters'; often the workers' lovers who keep an eye on their charges⁵.

Sex in the City: The Consolidation of the Massage Parlour in the City

The complex interweaving of government, police, sex business owners, sex workers and in some cases 'criminal financiers' has led to the massage parlour being a dominant organisational form in the 'sex industry'. The Massage Parlours Act 1978, through its licensing capacity, gave massage parlours some legitimacy to operate as normal businesses. It enabled those state endorsed massage parlours to operate reasonably free from prosecution⁶. Periodic prosecutions of owners and workers, however, helped to maintain an element of risk and concealment about the industry.

⁵ There has been some informal talk recently of a growing 'gang' presence in the organisation of street prostitution.

⁶ While there has been some stability in the Christchurch massage parlour industry in the last few years there has also been a lot of instability for sex workers. I have been told that for a long time after the Massage Parlours Act 1978 was introduced police harassed sex workers and some owners of sex businesses with drug and prostitution activity prosecutions.

While the Massage Parlours Act 1978 did not formally legalise prostitution through massage parlours, the creation of a licensing and registration scheme indirectly standardised this style of outlet for commercial sex. In this way, many massage parlours came to operate in very similar ways. For instance, the legal ambiguity is dealt with through certain creative accounting methods. Because the massage parlour is legally prohibited from selling sexual services, or even knowing that prostitution is occurring on the premises, owners and workers must perform a double transaction with the client: If the client wishes to pay by credit card the transaction must be separated out. The client pays the massage parlour fee in one transaction, then the worker must perform the next credit card transaction for any *extras* they negotiate in private with the client. If the transaction is not separated out there is documentation of a single large credit to the massage parlour account. This can be used as evidence that prostitution is occurring on the premises (brothel keeping), and that the owners are in fact living on the earnings of prostitution.

Similarly, in Christchurch most massage parlours do not give out what are called 'all inclusive' prices; that is, prices which include the price paid for a massage as well as the price of any extra services⁷. As one manager informed me:

"We could make a lot more money if we gave out all inclusive prices, practically nine out of ten people ask, how much is it going to cost me, but we can't give out that information, we have to protect ourselves."

This is one reason why significant price competition has not developed amongst massage parlours.

Nevertheless, licensing and registration offered recognition and quasi-legitimation for the operation of commercial sex in the city. In turn, this created a form of market stability (Frey et al, 1981; Rosen, 1982) for commercial sex in massage parlours. City economies also shape commercial

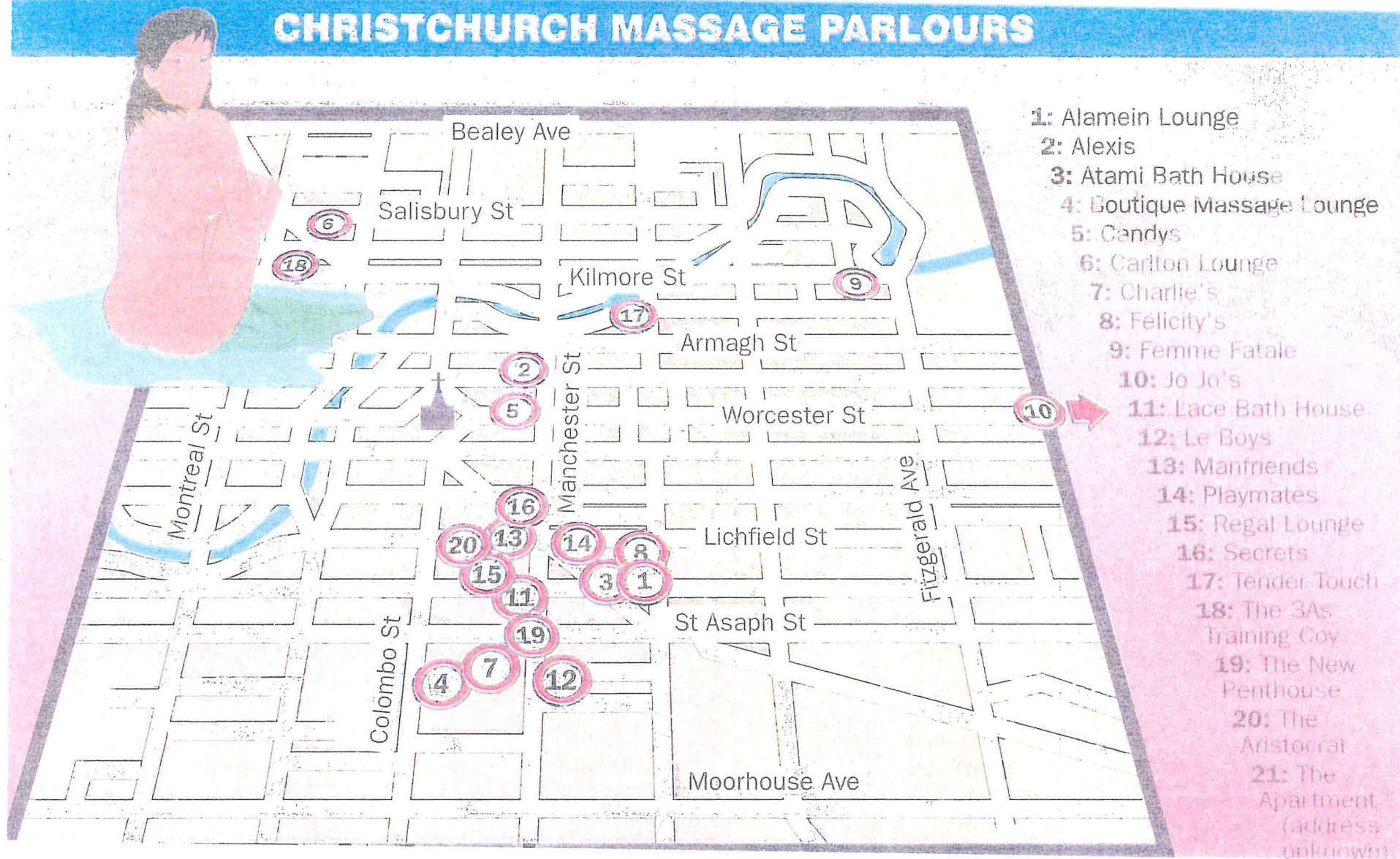
⁷ This is far more common in Christchurch than in other parts of the country.

sex markets. The map of massage parlours in the inner city area of Christchurch (see next page) shows that the majority of massage parlours are clustered around the Manchester Street area⁸. Concentrating businesses of a similar nature in one area can prove useful to both buyer and seller. The clustering of businesses reduces costs incurred by the client - both time and money - in the search for sexual services. Clustering also allows customers to 'shop around' for the services (Reynolds, 1986; Morgan, 1977). Clustering massage parlours in one area benefits their owners because advertising costs are reduced. The question becomes not whether you will go to a massage parlour, but which massage parlour attracts you (Appendix). It also allows for the attraction of chance customers (spot markets), as well as the development and maintenance of a regular clientele.

The grouping of massage parlours has been facilitated by the economic ecology of that area of the city. Manchester Street is not an economically thriving area, so the rents are cheaper, yet it still provides good access to the central city. The massage parlours and the increasing number of bars in the south east side of the city operate symbiotically. The client may have a few drinks before going to a parlour, and the bars and night life bring more people into the area. Furthermore, massage parlours occupy many of the large real estate spaces in that part of the city which would otherwise not be rented. In many ways, the massage parlours have contributed to the economic maintenance of particular areas of the city (Rosen, 1982).

⁸ Massage Parlours must operate only in commercial or industrial areas of the city. Yet this does not really explain their clustering in a particular area of the city.

CHRISTCHURCH MASSAGE PARLOURS



Graphic: John Harford, 'Christchurch Massage Parlours' from the article "police say city sex work a growth industry", by Kevin Taylor, *The Press*, Christchurch, 3:17 page 3 1997

Making Trust, Managing Risk and Doing Work through the Massage Parlour

The massage parlour operates as a *broker* between the client and the worker; who, in return for the fee paid by the client and the shift fee paid by the sex worker, brings together these two participants. The massage parlour operates to institutionalise a form of organising commercial sex which offers both the client and the worker a number of advantages. The parlour system also benefits the police through clustering 'sex industry' personnel in one close area of town. This makes it easier for police to monitor their activities - often visiting each parlour in order to liaise with workers and owners in the process of gathering information on crime and 'criminals' in the city.

Benefits to the Client

A man who wishes to purchase a sexual service has a number of choices. He can visit a massage parlour, of which there are many different varieties and styles. He can ring an escort agency or massage parlour that does escorting and have an escort sent to his hotel or private home. He can also walk or drive the streets around Manchester Street and negotiate services with a street worker.

In the massage parlour and the escort agency, the client has to pay a fee or brokerage charge, the price of which may depend on the market niche occupied by the massage parlour or services offered by the sex business. This fee contributes to reducing the non-monetary costs and risks to the client; saving him time and effort in locating sexual services, without the possible embarrassment of mis-identifying a sex worker (as happened to a female friend who was not a sex worker, but who was asked, while waiting for a bus on Manchester Street, how much she charged for certain sexual services - much to her anger and his embarrassment).

In comparison to massage parlours, clients that frequent street sex workers pay substantially less for their sexual service because there is no brokerage fee built in to the price. Yet the client must manage the inconvenience of travelling the streets looking for a street worker, and then negotiate a place to complete the services. So despite the economic incentive to visit street workers, a significant number of men will visit massage parlours instead. They offer a more secure, trusted, comfortable and discreet atmosphere for commercial sex (Reichert and Frey, 1985).

In this way, the massage parlour operates as a third party in the commercial sex transaction. It brings the worker and the client together in a central private location, and offers them both a form of security from physical and financial danger. From the clients' point of view, this can reduce the risk of being robbed or blackmailed by the sex worker (Reichert and Frey, 1985). Unlike the case in massage parlours, a street worker can be a totally unknown person to the client, which decreases the opportunity for recourse. As a police detective said:

"Clients get rolled by the street workers, it is not always the girls, often it is the transsexuals that will steal their wallets, beat them up, ...that's the worst problem on the streets."

In such situations, if the sex worker in any way victimises the client, his only recourse is to the police. This is unlikely to be an option for many given the stigma and the negative publicity which may result. A police detective comments:

"The guys are usually married men and too embarrassed to say anything, so you don't hear about it."

Thus, massage parlours provide some organisational protection against the threat of theft (Pittman, 1971). The sex worker is known to the parlour and to the police through the registration scheme. The client is more likely to complain to the owner of the commercial sex businesses than take the issue to

the police. The massage parlour operates to take some of the dangers out of commercial sex with strangers (Akerlof, 1970).

The massage parlour also offers the client a standard format for commercial sex. He can be guaranteed a sexual service in comfortable surroundings. In many cases the management of sex businesses operate from the perspective that the 'customer is always right'. The owner/operator knows that if the client is not satisfied with the service provided, they have plenty of other choices in town. The manager of an up-market massage parlour told me that on the odd occasion when a sex worker is 'double booked', or some other problem arises, it is best to be honest with the client, apologise and offer the man a complimentary visit.

Benefits to the Sex Worker

Some street workers spurn the practices of massage parlour operators as exploitative, costly, and over rated as a secure form of employment. However parlour workers make up an estimated 60% of all those who work in the New Zealand 'sex industry' (Woods, 1996). Sex workers in massage parlours are attracted to the organisational style because of the benefits it offers, perceived or real.

One benefit to the massage parlour worker is that the process of soliciting customers is collectivised. Men come to the parlours attracted by signs, advertising, or 'word of mouth'. Some of them may even become regular customers of the business or the sex worker. This reduces the effort required by the parlour workers to get customers. This is in contrast to the street worker who has to advertise with her physical presence on the street, where the weather, the harassment from members of the public and the police, coupled with the threat of physical violence from customers, may create very uncomfortable and dangerous working conditions.

The massage parlour reduces the risk of violence to the sex worker and the need for a 'pimp'. Street work can be very dangerous, as is pointed out in this article from The Press:

"The man refused to pay \$40 after a liaison in an alley on the corner of Worcester and Manchester Streets about 2.45 am. He punched and kicked the sex worker and stole \$190 from her" ("Sex Worker Beaten, Robbed" in The Press, Christchurch, 21:10:1994)

In massage parlours, the client is confined in the establishment. If the sex worker screams for help there can be people to assist her very quickly. The client also knows that if he doesn't pay he may risk physical violence or even answer to the police. As one manager of a massage parlour told me:

"...the client said: 'I'm not paying'. I said: 'Either you pay now or I will call the police'. He said he wouldn't pay, thinking that I wouldn't ring the police because prostitution is illegal. But I did, and the police sent three cops around, and they said: 'Right pay the girls now, or we will take you in'. You should have seen his face drop. If we hadn't had such a good relationship with the police I would have had to ring the Highways (Highway 61 gang), or someone like that..."⁹

While massage parlours offer more security from violent clients, management of commercial sex businesses can sometimes offer a similar threat of physical and sexual violence. In some businesses, training the new sex workers can be a job that some male owners believe they should do personally. In conversations with police detectives and with sex workers, I was told of several male owners that had been associated with these 'practical training sessions'. Some male owners say that the women must be "tried and trained" before starting work. Some male owners also get their friends to help out with practical training sessions. At these sessions women are sometimes paid, but more often not.

⁹ This quote from a massage parlour owner indicates further how the legally ambiguous position of massage parlours operate to involve gangs: In this case, as an informal means of controlling clients. This case sets out the kinds of tensions which exist between operating as a legitimate business and as an illegal brothel, which creates the spaces that exist for gangs to act as financiers of massage parlours.

An article in SIREN (Sex Industry Rights and Education Network) titled "The Casting Couch" stresses the negative stance workers and the NZPC take towards this type of behaviour from male owners:

"...beware of male owners/operators who insist upon having sex with girls during job interviews, who continue to force them to have sex whilst employed and who have used standover tactics or violence (to the point of hospitalisation) on their girls" (SIREN, Feb/March, 1989, p. 21).

Similarly, owners of massage parlours can economically exploit their workers through implementing cash fine systems (see chapter four), or withholding sex workers' money from credit card transactions with the clients.

The parlour environment offers sex workers the opportunity to develop relationships with other sex workers. Many workers talk about the support and solidarity that develops from working closely with the same group of women. Talk between sex workers is an important way that information concerning client relations and safer sex practices can be discussed. In contrast, escort workers and street workers may operate in relative isolation from other sex workers.

In summary, the massage parlour, as an organisational form of commercial sex, offers owners and workers a quasi-legal form of selling sexual service. The licensing of massage parlours through the Massage Parlours Act 1978 helped create some stability (even though there has been some instability created for sex workers) in the prostitution market through police 'tolerance' of an organisational form of commercial sex enterprise. This form of organisation has standardised the sexual product for the client in a stable comfortable environment. It offers the sex worker a regular and, most often, protected environment through which to do her work. The massage parlour institutionalises a form of protection for both the client and the sex worker which street sex work does not.

Benefits to the Police: Doing Police Work in the 'Sex Industry'

In Christchurch there is no vice squad; instead there is now just one detective involved in policing the 'vice area' which incorporates both the gambling and sex industries. His job is to gather intelligence and distribute it to different policing areas to be actioned:¹⁰

"My job is more as a liaison with the people in the sex industry than a prosecutor. What I am supposed to do is liaise with the parlour owners and the parlour workers, escorts and street workers, befriend them and let them know that I am out there and that they can get hold of me if they have any problems. I think this is a very interesting area, but basically, why I am here is that the opportunity to gather informants and information on the more notorious criminals in town is very high"¹¹ (police detective, Christchurch).

In this way, the city's massage parlours offer the police a style of organising commercial sex centrally, which locates the owners of sex businesses and sex workers under one roof, and in close proximity to other massage parlours. Thus, the police can easily visit parlours to check on who is working at them, and what is going on in them¹².

'Targets' is police jargon for international or national criminals who are beyond the reach of normal routine policing. Massage parlours offer an opportunity for police to speak to people and gather information about the activities of these different people. The police detective expounds on the ways he gathers information in Christchurch:

¹⁰ In the early 1980s in Christchurch there were six parlours, and three detectives and a detective sergeant solely on vice. With the decentralisation of the police in 1990, that squad was disbanded and replaced by only one detective and a detective sergeant. Since then, it has come down to one detective to do the job that four had previously done. This is why the Christchurch police detective in charge of the vice area believes his job is more about regulating than eradicating prostitution.

¹¹ This is a situation similar to nineteenth century Paris where: "The madam's dependent status made her cooperative, and the police used her as a source of intelligence on criminal activities as well as in the search for clandestine prostitutes and houses" (Harsin, 1985).

¹² Many people in the 'sex industry' believe that police surveillance of massage parlours is a violation of the human rights of those working in this part of the industry.

"...it's 1 or 2 % of the population that are the bad ones. But, there are a lot of good people out there that for one reason or another they have got involved with one of these people. However, somewhere along the line these criminals are going to get these people really pissed off and there is only one place they can go. And if I am out there asking questions and they know that I am out there asking questions then they will come and give me a yell, and say "Hey do you want to know about this guy?"

The detective suggests that it wasn't just people directly involved in the industry that gave him information, but also the mothers, brothers, and sisters of sex workers.

Gaining the trust of people in the 'sex industry' was an important tool in police work:

"...they have to learn to *trust* you. It takes a good two years to build up that relationship, it has only been in the last year that things have been improving... Then you get to a peak where you have a good sixty percent of the intelligence coming in and they are telling you what is going on" ¹³(police detective, Christchurch).

Information is not always freely supplied to the police by sex workers - trust is scarce between these two groups, much police information gathering is opportunistic. As the detective comments:

"...the girls won't always talk to me unless they have been jilted by the guy or they have been crossed by them".

Trusting the police is not something unconditional. Police enter into the economic world of commercial sex as traders (Hobbs, 1988) where they offer favours for information:

"...for instance if they are wanted on a warrant for arrest of non payment of fines, and I know that, I can, instead of locking them up for the night, let them go and tell them to go down to the court and fix it up" (police detective, Christchurch).

¹³ Boles and Garbin (1974) have suggested that sex workers are some of the night people who see and hear about the happenings of the city. In this way, sex industry personnel can be vital sources of information for the police concerning drugs, stolen property and violent crimes.

In accordance with the informality of the commercial sex economy, the police often work informally (Hobbs, 1988), doing favours for people in the industry:

“Someone in the parlour will express concern over one particular owner and what he does to his new girls and because they can’t do anything about it, I am asked to go and do something unofficially. So I go down and say, I know this is going on, if you don’t pull your head in look out. He doesn’t know where it has come from and so he starts watching his back a bit more and so it stops. It is just an unofficial thing but it stops something before it gets worse” (police detective, Christchurch).

Yet as Rubenstein (1973 cited Atkinson and Boles, 1977) suggests, the police also exploit the legally ambiguous position held by those in the ‘sex industry’ to gain information in return for police toleration of particular practices. “His [the vice officer’s] steadiest source of information is what he collects as rent for allowing people to operate without arresting them”. Police employ a number of different strategies, then, in order to do their work. In order to maintain their authority and comply with their role as law enforcement, the police must sometimes prosecute those who violate the laws governing the ‘sex industry’, as this newspaper article suggests:

“Two women were arrested yesterday and charged with brothel keeping. More than 45 people were arrested on soliciting and brothel keeping charges in the city last month” (“Big Crack Down” in The Press, Christchurch, 1:2:1993).

However, the majority of the police work in the ‘sex industry’ is about talking to people and gaining their trust, because massage parlours and ‘sex industry’ workers are good sources of ‘intelligence’ gathering on the ‘criminal’ networks which cross cut ‘sex industry’ businesses.

Policing the Boundaries of the ‘Sex Industry’

The licensing and registration of massage parlours created a boundary for the policing of the ‘sex industry’. Unlicensed workers and owners operated out of small escort agencies or solicited custom on the streets, bars or ships. The licensing system created a means through which police could regulate

prostitution markets via the massage parlour. With a boundary to commercial sex practices in the massage parlour, police could concentrate on those sex workers outside the boundary (illegal immigrant sex workers, street sex workers) (Frey et al., 1981; Storch, 1977) and other varieties of crime more politically demanding. The following newspaper article of an incident in Auckland indicates the way that police can operate to supervise the boundaries of commercial 'sex industry', prosecuting those that are operating illegally.

"About 40 Thai women will appear in the Auckland district Court this week on soliciting charges.

The women, many of them overstayers, were arrested during a police and immigration swoop in Auckland early on Sunday.

...most arrests occurred after raids on 12 massage parlours. Immigration officials who questioned 70 Thai women found 33 were working illegally..." ("40 on Soliciting Counts", in The Press, Christchurch, 2:2:1993).

Forms of prostitution concealed in massage parlours are of less concern than those out in the open streets:

"...the police want to encourage prostitutes to stay off the streets and crackdowns on street walkers are likely to continue...the police say street walking is of particular concern because of its lack of regulation and health dangers" (Walker, 1993).

Summary

In this chapter, I have endeavoured to demonstrate the importance of understanding prostitution laws within the context in which they are interpreted and enforced (Arnot, 1988 cited Neave, 1995). This chapter has characterised the 'sex industry' as being both regulated and constrained by the laws governing prostitution, but also the ways these laws have provided certain opportunities for 'sex industry' innovators to organise prostitution businesses amongst and between the laws and their enforcement. To this end, I have argued that through the Massage Parlours Act 1978, the police and the Government endeavoured to regulate and contain drug trafficking, and the activities of 'organised crime' that they suspected were operating through massage parlours. However the consequences of the Act have not been to

seriously prohibit prostitution, but to regulate and contain who could own, manage and work as a sex worker in the massage parlour. As Neave (1988) suggests, legal sanctions do not eradicate or reduce the extent of prostitution, but determine the structure of the 'sex industry', and the conditions under which sexual services are sold. This chapter has built on this idea, representing the 'sex industry' in Christchurch not as being solely determined by the law, but as a complex development between the owners, workers and clients of sex businesses, criminal financiers, the laws governing prostitution, and their police enforcement.

In this way, the Massage Parlours Act 1978 provided opportunities for an organisational framework among massage parlours, requiring the presence of a licensed owner, and a register of masseuses for police inspection. The massage parlour developed as a form of selling sex which wove a space for itself between and among ambiguous legal sanctions and their enforcement.

Some of the consequences of the Massage Parlours Act 1978 were to offer operational boundaries which both constrained and regulated the owners of massage parlours; they could operate to sell massages, but not sex. Thus, the parlour became a hybrid form of sex business operating under 'government license' but with limited avenues for financial support from the banks that saw them as brothels. A space still existed, the Christchurch police suggest, for 'criminal entrepreneurs' and 'organised crime' in the 'sex industry' to provide the market with finance. In some cases, where a person could not get a license to own a massage parlour because of criminal convictions, a front person (someone without convictions) could be used to apply for the license. In this way, the 'criminal' element maintained a position in the 'sex industry' allowing them to be part of a 'supportive network' (Frey et al., 1981) through financial capital - yet increase their distance from any possible convictions.

Further consequences of licensing massage parlours have been to consolidate them as a dominant form of commercial sex in Christchurch. In this way, the Act helped stabilise an otherwise unstable industry. And even

though police prosecutions created an instability in the industry, massage parlours have developed an organisational form which offers a relatively safe and trusted environment for sex workers and clients. The massage parlour has emerged in an ambiguous space between a legal establishment for facilitating commercial sex, and an illegal brothel. The owners of these establishments act as brokers between the client and the sex worker, taking away any space that could exist for the traditional style pimp.

Law enforcement benefits from a licensed and thus controlled prostitution network, which has the further advantage of being a generally hidden form of prostitution in the parlour, and therefore not directly violating public sensibilities. Organising prostitution through the central city massage parlours gives the police a contained market through which to bargain information on more notorious criminals whose operations cross cut the 'sex industry'. Police endeavour to gain information from sex business owners, managers and workers by befriending them, bartering favours from them, or exploiting their uneasy position vis à vis the law to get information from them. The police role has not become totally absorbed with information gathering, however. At the boundaries of the 'sex industry', operators and sex workers still have to be prosecuted for violating the laws governing the organisation of prostitution.

The suggestion that prostitution is intimately related to the economic characteristics of a community is not new. Lermert (1951, cited Frey et al., 1981) stated that prostitution has been, and remains, integral to many functions or organisations which are sanctioned enterprises in the community, and important in any economy. Owners of massage parlours have suggested that since the late 1980s, there has been a decline in the massage parlour market for sexual services. This, they have argued, is because of the competition between parlours - numbers vary between 18 and 24 in the city. Similarly, increasing numbers of bars, cafes, clubs and other entertainments available to men in Christchurch has reduced the amount of money spent on paying for sex. One

massage parlour owner complained that since the Casino opened it has cost him \$2000-\$3000 in lost customers per month.

Many of the parlours in town are relatively large, some have saunas, and spa pools, most are equipped with showers, and all have to be heated. This makes the overheads of such businesses high; some estimated the operating costs between \$1000 and \$5000 a month. At different times over the last two years I have heard that as many as 7 or 8 parlours have been on the market at the same time.

\ The down turn in the business economy, coupled with the increased variety of leisure activities open to men in the city, has reduced the profitability of the massage parlour industry. One strategy to lower overheads and to increase product markets has been to diversify prostitution markets into escort work. So one final consequence of the Massage Parlours Act 1978, and the institutionalisation of the massage parlour as a central city form of organising sex work, has been to create alternative spaces in the suburbs. In Christchurch, escort agencies entail a different form of organising commercial sex, owned and operated predominantly by women sex workers.

The escort industry has operated alongside massage parlours for a number of years as an alternative for workers who did not wish to work in massage parlours, or could not work in massage parlours because of criminal convictions. Yet, it was not until the early 1990s that the escort market really became popular as an alternative form of commercial sex business. The following chapter deals with the diversification and expansion of prostitution markets into escort agencies. This has created new opportunities for owners and workers, and new problems for police.

CHAPTER THREE

SEXING THE SUBURBS: NEW SPACES, NEW MARKETS IN ESCORT AGENCY PROSTITUTION

Escort services have existed in Christchurch for a number of years. In the late 1970s and into the 1980s, however, they were known as 'out-call massage', and were organised both as small private businesses and as an extra service available from massage parlours. This style of prostitution offered alternative employment for sex workers who did not want to work in massage parlours or on the streets (Julia, in Jordan, 1991). It also offered alternatives to those who were legally unable to work in massage parlours because of certain criminal convictions.

Escort agencies offer a wide range of services to a male clientele. This form of prostitution occupies an ambiguous and changeable urban/suburban commercial space. In physical terms, this space may include a private escort's home where she/he operates alone or in the company of several others; it may be a rented flat on a busy suburban street where the comings and goings of clients and escorts are not noticed, or the space may exist only as a telephone number in the newspaper, with the promise of an escort at your home/hotel/motel in thirty minutes.

In this Chapter I will discuss how it is that commercial sex markets have diversified and expanded from the massage parlour and street work forms of prostitution, and discuss some of the consequences of this process.

The escort agency reworks the public commercial worlds of prostitution which have traditionally been organised through the massage parlour. Escorts recreate the brothel space in the private home of the client or in the hotel, motel or suburban house of the escort/agency. Like the massage parlour, the escort agency occupies a legally ambiguous space. However, unlike massage

parlours, the escort agencies are not governed by any Acts of Parliament (such as the Massage Parlours Act 1978). Instead, they manoeuvre around prohibited prostitution activities, building on the law's imprecision. To this end, the escort agency has been able to move among the laws governing the organisation of prostitution by selling *time* with the escort, and not a sexual service. Yet implicit in escort work, as in massage parlour work and street work, is the exchange of money for sexual services. In this way, escort agencies offer innovative and alternative forms of organising prostitution activities through selling sex in the suburbs.

The first point of contact between the client and the escort/agency is the telephone. As opposed to the massage parlour, where the sex worker can be seen by the client, the escort must be described to the client over the telephone. The telephone is also an important tool in reducing hoax calls and potentially dangerous situations in escort work. The receptionist in the escort agency will take the telephone number of the client, contact the escort worker and give them the details of the job. The escort worker will then ring the client to check that they do in fact live at that phone number. The escort will also ring the escort agency once he/she arrives at the clients house, hotel room or motel unit. The escort will call again once she/he has finished the job to inform the agency that all has gone to plan. After the service has been completed, the escort must go to the agency to give them their share of the clients fee. This is usually worked out on a set fee basis.

The escort style of organising prostitution has increased in Christchurch in the last seven years, from several small businesses in the 1980s, through to over 50 agencies today. This diversification of the 'sex industry' has exploited new markets in both heterosexual and homosexual sexual services. It has moved out of the central city to take advantage of lower rents in the suburbs. This has made escort work an attractive and accessible option for sex workers dissatisfied with massage parlour work. In this way, I believe the

diversification into escort sex work marks a shift in ownership patterns to a more female dominated form of prostitution business in Christchurch.

Escort agency work benefits sex workers by allowing them to work from home and by utilising a freelance on-call system. It has also given sex workers an alternative to working in male owned massage parlours, by allowing them the opportunity to work in female owned escort agencies. Still another important benefit has been the space that has opened up for male and transgendered sex workers to own and operate out of escort agencies. The isolation of working from home can be a disadvantage, however. Collectivised work in the massage parlours offers workers the opportunity to talk about clients, safer sex practices and/or the difficulties associated with being a sex worker; the dispersed and potentially isolated nature of escort work does not.

In part, the move towards escort work has been facilitated by a changing clientele. Sex workers have noticed a decline in the numbers of 'farmer' clients since the economic decline in agriculture, and an increase in 'businessmen'. Markets for businessmen, however, required a more discreet service from sex workers. In this way, the client's home, hotel room or motel unit have the added advantage of discretion, and offer a more 'intimate' environment for sexual services.

Nevertheless, the key to the increase in escort agencies has been the space created in The Press newspaper for advertising escort services. This space developed out of a deal between a Christchurch police detective and the management of The Press newspaper. I believe this was a bid by the police to register and thus control this new form of unregulated sex work. Escorts are now required to visit the vice detective in person, and to register their real name and address, and the names and telephone numbers that they wish to advertise in The Press¹. The police will then send a letter of confirmation to

¹ Sex workers have said that police require photographs for registration also.

the newspaper which then will allow that worker or agency to advertise. This informal registration of escorts has had a similar effect on the escort industry as the Massage Parlours Act 1978 had on the massage parlour industry. Informal registration helped to institutionalise a place in the 'sex industry' for escort agencies. This has created a dual market of sex businesses - the escort agency and the massage parlour - which has increased competition and tensions between these two forms of organising commercial sex work.

In this chapter, as in the last, I have argued that the creation of prostitution businesses are a product of the complex inter-weaving of 'sex industry' innovators, sex workers, their clients, the laws governing prostitution and police enforcement practices. Yet unlike the last chapter, which focused on the Massage Parlours Act 1978, this chapter will examine the ways that escort agencies have developed around informal police practices as they have endeavoured to regulate and control the activities of a new branch of the 'sex industry'.

In Search of the 'Private in the Public': Ambiguous Spaces, Escort Agencies and the Law

Escort agencies weave together public and private worlds (Jordan, 1992) in social, spatial and legal terms. These public businesses of prostitution recreate the brothel space in the private space of the client's home, hotel room, motel unit, or in the private home or flat of the worker or agency. This differs from the massage parlour, which is a sex-on-site venue and is classified as a public space. Similarly, the street worker engages in negotiations with clients in the public space of the street.

Unlike the massage parlour, which is situated in the city, the escort agency is able to construct a brothel which can span multiple locations. In many cases, the escort agency is separated from where the escort and the client meet. For instance, some escort agencies may employ - or have on their books - five, ten or even twenty workers who are contacted by telephone or pager and

notified as particular jobs become available. The escort is sent to the client's house, hotel room or motel unit; the 'brothel space' is transferable, and changes with the environment that the escort finds her/himself in.

Unlike the massage parlour that sells massages, escort agencies weave a path among the laws governing the organisation of prostitution through selling *time*. The organisation of escort agencies is a response to the laws which seek to prohibit and control the practices of organising the sale of sexual services: brothel keeping, living on earnings of prostitution, procuring and soliciting. These businesses avoid the laws by selling time with clients not a sexual service. Because these laws prohibit specific practices involved in organising prostitution, they simultaneously leave many other activities unrestricted. The law helps create spaces for innovators in the 'sex industry' in that while it prohibits some practices, it makes no mention of others. In this way, new spaces have been created by 'sex industry' innovators for the selling of sexual services through the escort agency.

The use of a variety of different locations diffuses the danger of brothel keeping prosecution. The use of the client's private home for the sexual service means that neither the client, sex worker nor the owner of the escort agency are liable to prosecution for keeping a brothel (Plunket, 1996). Similarly, brothel keeping is difficult to prove when the physical brothel space has multiple and constantly changing locations. However, the term brothel may include hotel and motel rooms, if rented by the escort agency. In the recent Corporate Affairs brothel keeping court case (see Plunket, 1996) Edward Anthony Truby and Karen Anne Glasgow were "convicted on nine charges of keeping brothels at the flats, hotel rooms and a motel unit that the pair rented and in which their escorts entertained their clients" (Plunket, 1996, p, 17).

In Christchurch there are also escort agencies where escorts operate privately from their homes or share premises with one or two others for the purposes of prostitution. This style of escort agency more generally see clients

in the escort's own house or apartment, but some also do out-calls. These escort businesses are legally more 'risky', as the brothel has a physical location, owned and operated by the escort. These operations are well dispersed amongst the community and operate discreetly, drawing little police attention as a result.

Still other types of agencies operate like massage parlours in the suburbs. One escort agency I visited was located on a busy suburban road. It looked so much like every other house, I walked past it several times before seeing the large red street number I had been given over the telephone. This particular business saw many of its clients on the premises; the operation was small enough to attract little attention in the community, with the busy street affording anonymity to the comings and goings of clients and workers. On the inside, the agency still looked like a normal suburban house; three tidy bedrooms and a lounge where the clients were greeted. The kitchen operated as the center of operations where the telephone was answered. At this particular business, the clients paid their money to the 'madam', not to the workers. The agency then organised a percentage payment to the workers - a relatively uncommon means of arranging transactions amongst escort agencies. If the business deals directly with money through these kinds of practices, it leaves operators vulnerable to prosecutions of living on earnings of prostitution and brothel keeping. Yet their discretion in the suburbs, and police toleration, has allowed them to practice prosecution free up to this point. The owner classified her business as an escort agency, but it operated more like a small brothel.

The ability of the escort agency to disperse and recombine elements of the traditional style brothel in multiple locations avoids the *public* market transactions of massage parlours and street prostitution. Instead, commercial sex is reworked as private transactions in *private* spaces. In this way, escort agencies are a more flexible organisational form, spanning multiple locations around Christchurch. This way of organising sex work can operate with lower

fixed costs. By way of contrast, the central city massage parlour organises sex by bringing both the clients and the sex workers together in a fixed location in the central city. The cost of renting a commercial space in the city greatly increases the overheads of the business.

In this way, the escort agency has developed a new space in the prostitution market. It operates between the massage parlour and street work - incorporating a less expensive and more flexible style, organised in the suburbs.

The Operations of Escort Sex Work

Like so many other modern businesses, escort agencies have fully exploited a wide range of communication technologies: newspapers, telephones, cellular phones and pager/beepers. Because the telephone is the first point of contact between the escort agency and the client, the interaction over the telephone becomes an important part of their operations. In the massage parlour, the client can see and choose a sex worker they find attractive. However in the escort agency, the telephone operators must describe the attractiveness of escorts' to each client. Matching the client with the right sex worker is an important part of an escort agency operator's work. The physical endowments of the escort are of particular concern to the client² - who makes his choice of escort from the verbal description he receives over the telephone. A male escort described the telephone procedure at his escort agency which advertised both men and women:

"The client rings - the receptionist will then ask what kind of age group and hair colour and so on he prefers; this is the selection process. The client will only see the escort that he chooses over the phone. The selection process is the selling, you guide the customer to the escort that is probably the most suited to them. It is all done on the phone. It is the same for guys, except, you ask if they would like him cut or uncut (circumcised or not), hairy or smooth?"

² For a similar phenomenon in boxing, see Wacquant, 1996.

While interviewing the owner of an escort agency, we were interrupted on several occasions by the clients' phone calls. The conversations went like this:

"Hello Paradise Escort Service, how can we help you...

Yes, we have two wonderful ladies on today, Jan and Julie. Would you like to hear their profiles...

Jan is 34, brown eyes, short auburn hair, 36-28-36 slim build and a nice personality. Julie is 20, blue eyes, tall and slender with long golden hair, 36-26-35, she is intelligent and friendly.

That's OK sir, please ring again, goodbye."

After the client has made his choice of workers, either the escort or the agency will ring the client back to ensure the call is not hoax; that the telephone number is correct and the caller does in fact live there.

"In our agency we prefer to take a contact phone number and call them back and then give them the address if they are coming in. If we are going out to them, then we will take a contact phone number so that we can call them back and confirm where they are. They will ring up and then we will ring them back and say yes that is no problem at all we will see you at such and such a time. And then we will go to the address that was given to us, if it is an out-call, and if it is an in-call we will meet them down there."

These are some of the strategies that escorts and agencies use to create a safer environment and to minimise risks in their work. Once the escort has established the validity of the call they will proceed to the clients house/hotel/motel or wait for the client to come to them.

For out-calls, larger agencies will have a male driver who delivers the worker to, and collects them from the job. He may or may not collect the money from the client personally, but does act as a source of security for the escort.

"My drivers take my girls to the out-calls, they collect the money, he checks the premises out. If he has any trepidation about the girls going in he will wait outside. And that is the way I like it, always it is my girls first."

Taxis are also used frequently by escorts, with some having accounts with the taxi companies. Taxis can also operate as security for the escort, as the escort may ask the taxi driver to wait till they have met the client and determined whether the job is safe or not.

Once at the client's house/hotel, another round of negotiations take place. Escorts suggest they are able to side-step soliciting laws by charging their clients for the *time* they spend with them, not the service.

"Clients are usually informed of the price prior to my arrival. My personal practice, and that of my agency, is cash up front or credit card or cheque as the case maybe. In this respect, we are staying within the law by paying for time not activity. I stress that they are buying my time and what they choose to do with that is mutually agreed upon."

Commercial exchange in escort prostitution fuses the worlds of intimate sexual contact in private spaces, and the public worlds of commercial service industry (Extavasia and Addison, 1992). Thus escort work occupies an ambiguous space. The private space of the client's home helps to safeguard the worker from soliciting charges. Prosecution of soliciting, for the purpose of prostitution, is only applicable in a 'public place' (s. 26. Summary Offences Act 1981) such as the public space of the massage parlour or on the street.

Once the transaction is completed, the escort will ring through to the agency to let them know she/he has arrived, that things are OK, and that he/she will be staying for a certain amount of time.

"...if I don't ring within a certain time period, then the agency will ring and make sure that I have arrived and make sure that everything is all right. That is another reason for taking the telephone number. The telephone number is not recorded unless it is a particularly ugly client that no one wants to see again, in such cases we keep a list of names and addresses and phone numbers."

After the liaison with the client, the escort must return to the agency with the agency fee. This fee is usually worked out on a split fee basis, which is different from the massage parlour where the client negotiates two transactions. One worker told me:

"Mostly you give a set fee to the agency per job, like the client gets quoted \$120 then the agency gets \$50 from each job, no matter how much you make - you can earn about \$ 60-70 per job that way".

The increase in competition between escort agencies has meant that some escort workers are making as little as \$25-30 per job. This usually requires the worker to have sexual intercourse with the client for that price.

In this section, I have demonstrated how escort services operate and how, through legally ambiguous spaces, they have developed new ways of organising prostitution. The escort agency is an innovation designed to construct and exploit new markets through alternative and less expensive methods. In the next section, I want to discuss these changes in more detail, suggesting that it is not simply a matter of massage parlour owners diversifying in a quest for more profit. Instead, I will argue that escort agencies are a complete reworking of the way sex work is done.

Sexing the Suburbs: The Expansion and Diversification Sex Markets

A rapid increase in the number of escorts and escort agencies available to Christchurch men in the last seven years represents a noticeable diversification of prostitution markets. A police survey of escort advertisements in The Press newspaper documents this change. On May 13, 1987, there were three escort agency advertisements in The Press. In 1993, there were 35 escort agency advertisements (The Press, 20:2:1993, p10). Most recently, a newspaper article cited the number of adverts on March 1, 1997, as 65 (Taylor, 1997, p. 3).

The 1990s, then, have seen a dramatic increase in the number of escort agencies in Christchurch. What emerged can be read as the reworking of existing forms of escort agency prostitution by 'sex industry' innovators. This has expanded and diversified markets for sexual services. This expansion and diversification has grown out of, and relied on, the existing social, economic and organisational relations which had developed in massage parlours and street work. The owner of an escort agency describes the future of 'sex industry' markets:

"I see escort services as definitely the way of the future. I don't see parlours as such going, but the format in which they are run has to change - some of them are talking about \$2500 per week in overheads, that is a lot of money. You need a lot of clients to break even with those costs. Especially with the competition out there."

Escort agency prostitution, operates using multiple locations which reworks markets through new forms of ownership, and creates new forms of employment relations - drawing in new clients and reworking some of the old.

Niche Markets for Escorts

Escort agencies have organised around niche markets for sexual services as this selection of adverts ("Escort Column", The Press, March 1997) demonstrates:

LARGER ladies now available. ph ...
 MARILYN'S escorts, absolutely highest class ladies, money back guarantee if not totally impressed, credit cards fine. ph...
 MATURE ladies escort service enriched with age. ph
 MY Fair Lady Escort Service. We specialise in classy ladies from the international circuit. For Heidi, Nicole, Naomi and other stunning ladies, ph ...
 GAY escort fun, private, discreet, good rates...
 TRANSSEXUAL Denise, male Sam....
 TRANSVESTITE escort services...
 TANIA private escort, ph ...

Escort agencies have developed niche markets to include larger escorts, high class escorts, mature escorts, exotic escorts, and private escorts (private escorts work on their own as independent workers and offer a more intimate style of service, because their main income is derived from regular clients) etc. Escort services have also opened up new spaces through which a wider range of sexual markets can be accessed. For instance, organised male sex work is a resource which fills a need in the market (Pittman, 1971). So too, markets for transgendered escorts have been exploited by transgendered sex workers as an organisational alternative to working on the streets. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

New Locations, New Networks

While escort service businesses offer less expensive and more flexible organisations, they also indicate a strategic move out of the city area. As Varlarde and Warlick (1973) have suggested, sex businesses in major central cities are sometimes sewn up by syndicates or individual entrepreneurial 'criminals'. In Chapter Two, I spoke of the financial problems of entering into the massage parlour business, and how this requires large amounts of capital. This money sometimes has to be sought through gangs or from other unofficial financial channels. Thus certain individuals/organisations are able to dominate, or at least influence, the massage parlour industry in the central city in Christchurch. As in some other countries (Duncan, 1996) this has left the suburbs open for commercial sex businesses.

Because escort work spans multiple locations, the network of people involved has also expanded. One popular location for escort work is the hotel/motel. These new sites create new situations for the interaction of sex workers with the larger community. The manager of an escort agency told me:

"We don't seem to have any problems with girls going to hotels, as long as there is discretion. In fact, we even get hotels ringing us up. Different hotels may ring up and organise escorts for Japanese men staying at the hotel, and other people staying in the hotel and that type of thing. But they do like discretion for the sake of the other people staying in the hotel.... They don't usually have drivers with the escorts in hotels, they are pretty safe really."

The concierge manager I spoke with at a Christchurch city hotel confirmed that escorts were sometimes requested by the hotel customers. Some customers would ring through to the escort agency themselves, while other hotel customers would ask the concierge to phone through to organise an escort on their behalf. The manager said: "...in these cases, we have regular escort agencies that we deal with". The main concern of the hotel was to

ensure that prostitution services were supplied as discreetly as possible so as not to offend the sensibilities of the other hotel customers³.

New Forms of Ownership

New forms of ownership of commercial sex businesses have developed out of the expansion and diversification of the 'sex industry' into escort agencies. Initially, I believed this diversification to be logical entrepreneurial progression on the part of massage parlour owners to maximise their profits (Reynolds, 1986) through reducing outgoing expenses and seeking new markets to exploit in the suburbs. While these assumptions have some validity, the move to escort services has, on the whole, not been undertaken by massage parlour owners. While there has been some fluctuation in parlour numbers over the last two years, there are nevertheless still eighteen or nineteen in the city. Instead, the increase in escort agencies has been driven by those women sex workers who have become disillusioned with working in massage parlours, or who believed they could make more money, or provide a better service to clients, through operating a business themselves. This expansion marks a new phase in the feminisation of sex business ownership. Therefore, while the 'true' lines of ownership in 'sex industry' businesses are difficult to determine (as we saw in the last chapter), through my conversations with sex workers and owners, and from my observations of the 'sex industry', I approximate that at least sixty to seventy percent of escort agencies are owned and operated by women. This compares to approximately thirty to forty percent of women owners in massage parlours.

Heyl (1979;1977) talks about becoming a madam as a career option for the professional prostitute. This option does not necessarily imply any significant financial reward over the other options (Goldstein, 1983); that is sex workers can sometimes make more money than the business owners. However, for

³ See Loren and Frey (1985) for a more in depth analysis of prostitution organised through hotels.

some of the owners of escort services, the ownership of their own businesses, either privately or with staff, offered more than just economic rewards. It offered them independence - reducing their reliance on or exploitation by massage parlour owners (often male), and offered a viable opportunity to become a self employed business person. As this sex worker comments:

"I would never work for a massage parlour again. Some of the owners make you parade around in your lingerie, it is like a meat market ... The shift fees and fines and the hassles with credit card money, it just wasn't worth it. Those bastards would end up with most of my money. I worked (in the massage parlour) for 18 months, then I thought, I could do better than this, I could own one."

From the people I interviewed in Christchurch, it seems that most women who own/operate escort agencies have been sex workers or have been associated with the industry (Goldstein, 1983). Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this; Goldstein (1983) suggests that as quasi-legal prostitution enterprises become more prevalent (more socially acceptable and less legally unstable) they will attract entrepreneurs from outside the industry. For example, one owner I interviewed said that the escort service offered her a chance to channel her 'people skills' and entrepreneurial flair into the business of selling sex:

"A former business partner of mine suggested that I buy into the business. I had never owned an escort agency before, nor had I worked as an escort. The opportunity presented itself and it is something different, the returns looked good for my investment, so I bought a half share. My other partner is a businessman, he does the accounts, but other than that I run the place, he likes to be a silent partner.

...The only business experience I had was buying and selling antiques, nothing to do with the industry. The businesses are similar in that I like making money."

In line with Goldstein's (1983) findings, sex workers owning escort agencies did not represent the 'ageing-out hypothesis', where owners were presumed to be aged sex workers who could no longer be financially successful through personally providing sexual services. Instead, the ownership of an escort agency offered sex workers more freedom to access

different markets and operate commercial sexual services in ways that suited them. The shift into owning an escort agency transformed them from sex workers and employees to employers and managers of other sex workers.

Operating an agency also offers an option, other than working on the streets, for those sex workers excluded from the massage parlour industry because of criminal prosecutions (s.18, Massage Parlours Act 1978). But, more importantly, it offers sex workers disillusioned with sex work in the massage parlour an alternative.

Owners of escort agencies have been able to capitalise on the disillusionment of many women who have worked in massage parlours. As the owner of one escort agency told me:

“I get a good selection of girls coming through here. I get a lot of ex-parlour girls applying for work here because they have become less than satisfied with their working arrangements at the parlours. Word of mouth really, the girls get to talking to someone and start telling them how much they make and those people come in.”

New Workers, New Benefits and New Employment Forms

Working for an escort agency or massage parlour has particular advantages over working on the streets or on your own as a private escort. Working for a business offers some security against physical danger from violent clients. The business also helps to secure anonymity, as the client does not know an escort's phone number or residential address. Private workers have to deal with both of these issues. As a worker in a firm, the escort has little concern about the administration involved in the day-to-day activities of running a business: advertising, organising the payment of bills, or the legal implications of organising prostitution services.

With more women owners in the escort industry in Christchurch, sex workers disgruntled with male management in massage parlours have the option of working for a woman owner in an escort agency. Velarde and Warlick (1973) have suggested that staff turnover in massage parlours is

largely in the constant search for a 'good boss', as this article taken from SIREN emphasises:

"I have been working about two years with most of my employers being men. So what do they know!! Haven't they all made passes, or at least commented in some perverted nature? I got sick of their arrogance, with their general put-down attitude. They forgot that I am a business woman and treat me like a slut, even forgetting that they need me to make THEIR money! About four months ago, I was hired by a women, who has ...much higher understanding of us girls. Yes, finally a woman who realises the way we feel, and wants us all to feel confident towards our own success" (Anon., "Women Bosses" SIREN, 7:8:1992).

Massage parlour work is organised around fixed settings - workers are unified under one roof. The sex worker goes to work for her 6-10 hour shift, and then goes home. Escort agencies organise work differently. The worker is often at home waiting to be telephoned by the agency. The escort worker then performs her tasks, sexual and non-sexual, at widely dispersed work sites.

The separation of the prostitution business from the site of sex work has both benefits and liabilities for the escort worker. Escort workers are able to operate from home rather than sitting for 6-8 hours dressed in uncomfortable clothes in a massage parlour. In working from home, the escort can potentially be on call for 24 hours per day. If they have a pager or cellular phone they do not even have to stay home by the telephone.

"The pager is a vital work tool; some people have cellular phones. The beeper is great because you can get on with your life. You don't have to hang around home all the time waiting for the phone to ring. It is great for mobility. Like there is nothing worse than if you miss a job because you go out, or if you go to the shops for five minutes."

This 'on call' status enables the escort worker to work many more hours than the massage parlour worker, who cannot spend 24 hours per day on site at the massage parlour.

Another advantage for the escort worker is that, unlike the massage parlour where the owner/manager is on site to make sure the worker's appearances are up to standard or to otherwise discipline the worker, the escort is not in immediate proximity to supervision by the escort agency owner/manager. The

owners of flexible firms must depend on the professionalism of the escort worker to do their work well.

While escort work can be more flexible than massage parlour work, it is also very demanding. Being on call, with 30 minutes notice, doesn't allow escort workers to go far away from home or get fully involved in other tasks such as gardening etc. Similarly, if the escort has children, it does not leave much time to find a child minder. The demands of being 'on call' 24 hours a day are very stressful and tiring.

Working as a prostitute from home also means having little communication with other sex workers. This isolation can be detrimental to the emotional well being of the sex worker because workers can provide emotional support for each other in a stigmatised profession. The talk of sex workers, in massage parlours and to a lesser degree on the streets, enables important support and friendships to develop, and facilitates the dissemination of information about sex work; including such issues as sexual health, condom use, and how to deal with difficult clients. Escorts, working in isolation from their homes, can lose out on the much needed support and information that can make sex work safer. Therefore, while the escort agency creates new flexible work opportunities for female sex workers to move out of the massage parlours, the occupational disadvantages of isolation, and the stress of operating as an escort, can counterbalance these benefits.

New Spaces for Male and Transgendered Sex Workers

There is a tendency to think of prostitution as involving only women and their heterosexual male customers. In many ways, this is understandable given that the most publicly prominent form of prostitution is the massage parlour - which are definitely heterosexualised commercial sex establishments. As Michael Brown (1997) has suggested, the inner city is very heterosexualised in terms of commercial sex (Valentine, 1996). As a result, male and transgendered sex work is often not included in studies of prostitution

(Prestage, 1994). However in many ways, escort agencies have opened up new spaces for male to male and transgendered markets for escort prostitution.

Escort agencies are able to capitalise on the discreet services they provide in having the escort meet clients at their house or hotel room. It is far more acceptable for men to purchase sexual services from women than for men to purchase sexual service from another man, especially as married men make up a large percentage of male escort's clients (interview with male escort). These clients may not define themselves as gay or even want to proclaim homosexual sexual practice openly (Van Der Poel, 1992). The organisation of work around heterosexuality is very different from the organisation of work around homosexuality because of the nature of the sexual stigma (Prestage, 1994). Recently, a male to male parlour, 'Le Boys', opened in Christchurch city. This parlour also offered transgendered workers. It only lasted several months however, closing down due to lack of business. People in the trade are not sure why the business did not succeed, but perhaps the visibility associated with entering a 'gay' parlour is a deterrent to many clients. In contrast, the escort agency offers anonymity to both male workers and male clients.

In Christchurch, male and transgendered sex workers have traditionally been organised around the gay baths and saunas, gay bars, through the streets, and through 'beats' (places where men have sex with men) around the city and suburban areas (Brown, 1997). Escort agencies offer transgendered sex workers and gay male workers, excluded from the central city massage parlours in Christchurch, an organisational form through which to work (Prestage, 1994).

Creating Clients: The Expansion of Client Markets for Commercial Sex

The 1980s saw a decline in the rural economy, with an increase in service and producer areas of the economy (Thorns, 1994). This affected who could afford to use the sexual services on offer in Christchurch. Services expanded and diversified to meet a new clientele. One owner I spoke with had made the

change from working in a massage parlour to owning an escort agency. She talked about the changes in clientele and their different needs which she had endeavoured to meet:

“Ninety percent of the clients were farmers, that was before the big farming crash. They were a very traditional lot. But when we opened up here I decided to go for the businessman side of the market. The services were virtually no different for farmers, it is just that they were booming then (the farmers) that was the late seventies early eighties, everything was subsidised, it was great for them, it was just that after that period they fell off and businessmen came in. Businessmen wanted things more sophisticated. The farmers were more interested in a friendly girl. The businessmen want sophisticated elegant ladies, the farmers were less demanding and more grateful.”

Sex workers and researchers alike have argued that the sex paid for by the client is only part of the larger experience offered by prostitutes (Van Der Poel, 1992). Satisfying the customer involves more than just simply supplying the barest of sexual services. It is the way that sexual service is created and maintained which many clients pay for. Perhaps this can further explain the differences in price advertised in the newspaper. The sex worker who sells a 20 minute special cannot create the illusion of intimacy to a very great extent. The higher priced escorts have more economic incentive to create the illusion of a ‘normal’ sexual experience to ensure repeat custom. More generally, escort work, through bringing the brothel to the client, can create new markets and new spaces for a more ‘personalised’, but still commercial, sexual experience for the client (Van Der Poel, 1992).

With the advent of HIV and AIDS, escort agencies offer the impression of a ‘cleaner’ and less stigmatised environment for commercial sex. The concept of an escort agency shifts the emphasis away from direct prostitution. Having the escort come to the client, rather than having the client go to a massage parlour or along Manchester Street to choose a street worker, adds credibility to the illusion of a more ‘normal’ and thus ‘safer’ sexual liaison.

Some Consequences of the Diversification of Commercial Sex Operations in Christchurch

The key to the success of escort agencies in Christchurch has been their ability to advertise their services in The Press newspaper. Unlike the massage parlour, which advertises through clustering together in particular districts of the city, and the street worker, who advertises his/her body through its presence on certain streets in the city, escort services rely solely on print advertising⁴ to gain clients.

The most important advertising link for escort service development has been the acceptance of escort advertisements in The Press and the subsequent creation of an Escort Column. Before 1993 the advertising for escorts and massage parlours had been mixed up in the Personal Columns of the newspaper. This sometimes led to misunderstandings between commercial sex clients and those genuinely looking for friends or partners in the personal columns. This created a number of problems for the newspaper.

The Press adopted a new policy in October 1993 which stopped escorts advertising phone numbers. I was told by the Editor of the Classified section at The Press, that escort adverts had been stopped because hoax escort adverts had been placed in the newspaper with the consequence of harassment for innocent members of the public. This had become embarrassing for the newspaper and potentially legally damaging.

The Press continued to allow massage parlours to advertise, because they were legitimate businesses registered with the court. The Classifieds Editor explains how the resultant deal between the newspaper and the police helped the police to create a register of escort sex workers and owners:

“The problem The Press had was how to know whether these adverts were authentic or not. We actually rang the New Zealand Police and had a talk to the detective. He said: ‘You have a problem, and we have a problem keeping

⁴ This can translate in some cases to enormous advertising overheads.

track of escorts that are carrying out illegal acts, that is, some escorts would come around to the clients place and the next day they would be burgled'.

...so basically we got together and we came up with a formula, and the formula is basically, if you are an individual escort, or an escort agency, and you wish to advertise with a telephone number then you must go around to the police and tell them that you want to advertise as an escort. You must give them your true name and address, and your working name or the name of the escort service, and phone number, then when we receive notification from the police to say that you have met their requirements, we will run your advert."

However, it is not just a matter of ringing up the station, as the police detective in charge of vice told me:

"Escorts now have to come in and register with the police. We have to keep those lists of escorts names and addresses very confidential because there is no legal reason why we should have them, but if they want to advertise as a escort that is what they have to do. We then give them a letter to take to The Press to say that they have registered with us and that their details are correct. This registering thing is the only piece of weight I can put on them that doesn't come back, it is the only way I have any control over them."

The unintended consequences of this 'deal' with the police in Christchurch and Wellington where it is also operational, was to give the industry some quasi-legal standing. In the minds of many escort proprietors, the same legitimisation afforded massage parlours through the Massage Parlours Act 1978 was to be given to escort agencies once they had registered with the police. The registration of escort services, as businesses able to advertise in the newspapers and in direct contact with the police, led some escort agency owners to assume they were beyond prosecution. But this is not the case - at least in some jurisdictions - as is demonstrated by the trial of the Wellington based 'Corporate Affairs' escort agency. The operators, Karen Anne Glasgow and Edward Anthony Truby, "had a clear impression that once they complied with registration and got permission to advertise they were informally licensed and need not fear prosecution provided they committed no other crimes" (Plunket, 1996, p.17).

The quasi-legal institutionalisation of both the massage parlour industry, through the Massage Parlours Act 1978, and the escort agency industry,

through the informal registration of escorts/agencies, has developed two industries in direct competition for both employees and clients.

More recently, escort agencies in Christchurch have taken to advertising an all-inclusive price in their advertisements, as these few from The Press, 1997 suggest:

AAAH! Garden of Eden escorts agency daytime special \$50 - hour incl. ph
 AMAZING specials. \$30 for 20 mins, ph ...
 ESCORTS, 6 girls offering a fantastic service at \$125 hr for quality you can't
 beat that, ph ...
 GAY escort fun service, \$40 per hour, \$20 ½ hr, all included. Jeff...
 HOT Cheeky Escort service \$50 all incl. Ph...

The 'all incl.' or 'all included' in these advertisements means that the price incorporates both the agency fee and the escort fee. The normal separation of the two prices, especially in massage parlours, is the result of legal prohibitions against prostitution. Most often massage parlours will not give out an all-inclusive price to clients, charging them only a massage fee on entry. The client must then negotiate another price with the sex worker in the relative privacy of a parlour room.

The advertising of all inclusive prices has created some tensions and conflict between escort agencies and massage parlours. Recently some massage parlours have begun to advertise all-inclusive prices, stating that if escort agencies can do it, so can they.

Still other massage parlour owners have complained to the Christchurch police and the Christchurch City Council about the operation of un-registered/unregulated/un-supervised escort agencies which undercut business from the licensed/regulated/supervised massage parlours. One owner I spoke with was involved with organising a 'massage parlour owners association' to lobby government to license massage parlours as the only legal form of selling sex. This, he suggests, would monopolise sexual services in the city, and give police the power to force out escort agencies.

In the final two weeks of completing this thesis (July 1997) the police, in consultation with The Press newspaper, moved to put more restrictions on what escort agencies could advertise in Christchurch. Escorts are no longer able to advertise prices in their advertisements, nor are they allowed to advertise time blocks of less than one hour. The police say that the advertising of all-inclusive prices and time blocks of 20-30 mins represent too overtly that prostitution is occurring in these businesses. One escort I spoke with suggested that the massage parlours had complained so vehemently about the competition of escort agencies that the police had moved to restrict their advertising. For whatever reason the restrictions have been evoked, this is a good example of the way that the police can regulate the activities of the 'sex industry' by means other than arrest and prosecution. In this case, the police have actively stepped into the prostitution market to regulate the activities of 'sex industry' businesses.

Still further responses from massage parlours to the popularity and competition of escort agencies have been to develop their own escort agencies. These businesses operate from the massage parlour and utilise parlour staff. This is one way that massage parlours have sought to compete with escort agencies.

Summary

Escort agencies offer alternative ways of organising prostitution, employing a decentralised organisational form of selling sex which separates the agency from the work site of the escort. They employ a less expensive and more flexible form of organising commercial sex. Escort agencies utilise less expensive suburban spaces and diffuse the brothel space, recreating it in the home, hotel or motel of the client, or in a private suburban residence of the sex business. Escorts offer a discreet service for the client, with no more effort to access than a telephone call. This style suits the local or travelling businessman and tourist who may not know his way around the city or is

uncomfortable entering areas of the city where prostitution services (massage parlours or street work) are offered.

Increasingly, small brothel style escort agencies have in-call facilities. These are often just houses in suburban areas used by the escorts and the clients as a site for sexual services. For those who are not staying in a hotel/motel and do not want the escort to come to their home, the in-call facilities offer a neutral space for the enactment of prostitution services.

The expanding market of escort agencies has taken advantage of the different and less expensive locations in the suburban areas of the city. This has enabled escorts to break free from the cycle of large financial investments needed to develop a massage parlour in the city, and the subsequent potential for alliances and connections with 'gangs' or 'criminal' entrepreneurs. This does not mean that the escort industry is free from gang involvement or the exploitation of male owners. Both have developed positions in this new form of organising prostitution. However, through my interviews and my observations of the industry, I suggest that the expansion of prostitution businesses into escorts marks the feminisation of sex business ownership in Christchurch. I estimate that at least sixty to seventy percent of escort agencies are owned and operated by women in Christchurch. These businesses offer sex workers, disillusioned with work in massage parlours, an alternative style of business to either own, or work from. In working from home, escorts operate in a more flexible work environment which enables workers to operate a larger number of hours but under conditions which can be very isolating. Escort workers must also deal with the added risk of going out to the clients house or hotel room on their own. The escort agency has also opened up new spaces through which male and transgendered sex workers can operate more safely, because sex-on-site venues in Christchurch have predominantly organised prostitution around women sex workers.

The escort agency has, in part, been facilitated by the demands of a new business class of client for whom a visit by a sex worker to their home, hotel

room or motel unit is a more discreet service in a more 'personalised' environment.

As a consequence of this move to escorts, police formed deals with The Press newspaper in order to create a register for escort sex workers. The unintended consequences of this informal regulation has been to consolidate the expansion of escort agencies, increasing their numbers. Read in this way, the police both acted to regulate and control the growing number of unregulated/unregistered escort businesses, and yet, it has been precisely their response, through the registration of escorts and their businesses, that has further developed and consolidated escort agency prostitution in Christchurch.

The move into escort agency prostitution, located in the suburbs, has dispersed the industry so that it operates more discreetly (Hancock, 1991). This benefits the owners, workers and clients through insulating them from police supervision and public attention. The dispersion and discretion of escort agencies means that they are less visible to the public and require less police attention.

In summary then, escort agencies can be seen as an innovation to diversify and expand prostitution markets. Escort agencies have been able to develop organisational styles of commercial sex that, like the massage parlour, thread a path between the intended and unintended consequences of ambiguous laws, and the practices of law enforcement officers. However unlike the massage parlour, that has been regulated and I argue institutionalised through an Act of Parliament, escort agency development has been greatly enhanced through informal deals made by police which created a register to regulate the activities of a growing escort industry. This also draws attention to the ways that informal police practices operate both to constrain and give opportunities to 'sex industry' personnel.

In the next chapter I will further discuss some of the ways that sex businesses compete between themselves for clients' custom. Massage parlours and escort agencies have developed new strategies for competing for the client

through personalising the sexual service. The stabilisation of sex businesses has involved using the client choice, or competition between sex workers and sexual services they provide, to discipline the workforce. The focus of the chapter will be an examination of the strategies that management employ to ensure that sex workers are 'doing good sex work'. As one sex worker said: "In competitive times, regular clients are your 'bread and butter'".

CHAPTER FOUR

SYSTEMS OF CONTROL: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STRATEGIES FOR REGULATING SEX WORKERS

In many ways the selling of sexual services is not very different from many other retail enterprises in the city. Like selling hair styling (Eayrs, 1993) or clothing (Prus, 1987) the development of loyal customers is crucial and to a large part, dependent on supplying a 'good service'. In the case of selling sexual services this entails the use of comfortable surroundings, and using honest and disciplined workers (Bourgois, 1996). Like other service industry businesses, selling sex relies heavily on the sex workers who interact with the clients and perform the everyday tasks of the service industry (Sosteric, 1996).

With the increased number of sex businesses and the industry's diversification into escort agencies, competition among firms has become more intense. In this environment, a focus on enhancing the relationship between the client and the sex worker has become increasingly important in developing competitive strategies for sex businesses.

Although much of owners/managers activities are orientated towards first-time or occasional buyers, sex businesses also, and increasingly, engage in activities intended to promote continuity more generally and loyalty more specifically (Prus, 1987). In this chapter I will examine the changing nature of the sex worker-client relationship, seeing it as one mediated through the actions/strategies of commercial sex owners/managers in their attempt to stabilise prostitution markets. I will examine these changes in sex work practice, as it developed from a more routine style of work in massage parlours where sex workers took it in turns to see clients through to a system where the client can choose the person he wants to see.

The shift to a more client-centred approach has altered 'work practices' in massage parlours. In this system a more personalised approach to sex work is fostered in that conversation and rapport with the client are what workers do to establish and maintain regular clients. Sex work in massage parlours has become more like freelance work as prostitution moves away from a guaranteed source of income to become organised around competition between the sex workers for clients.

Work practices in escort agencies operate differently than those in massage parlours. Because clients cannot visibly choose the escort, they must rely on a description given to them by a representative of the escort business. So while there is no direct face-to-face competition between escort workers as in the massage parlour, the proliferation of escort advertisements offer the client many choices of service. As a result of this increased competition the emphasis is placed on personalising the service to the client, to maintain his custom. Escorts utilise the informality of bringing the sexual service into the private home, hotel room or motel unit of the client in order to further create a more relaxed and personalised environment for the sexual service. Private escorts who see clients in their own home can also draw on this more personal environment.

Both of these ways of doing work in the 'sex industry' can be read as extending management control over sex workers through using client choice as a tool to ensure that 'good' sex work is done. Management use clients' requests as an indicator of 'good' performance by sex workers. A sex worker whose clients regularly ask for by name is assumed to do 'good' work. A sex worker who is not asked for by name on a regular basis and is only selected after being viewed in a parlour by the client is assumed to be performing poorly. This system offers managers ways of monitoring the sex worker's performance in the private room.

However, in emphasising a more personalised system of sex work, the sex workers also have a lever over managers and owners. A 'good' sex worker

can take her clients with her. In this way doing 'good' sex work and building up a regular clientele benefits the workers.

I will argue that these shifts in work practices are important to an understanding of how control systems actually operate within 'sex industry' businesses. This account of the inclusion of the customer in the control process seeks to position the client, not as an anonymous form of control in the existing hierarchy of the firm, but instead, as an important new form of control which operates to personalise the relationship between the sex worker and the client (Austrin, 1997).

While many of the internal workings of 'sex industry' businesses have parallels with other service sector businesses (Austrin, 1997; Tolich, 1996), the registration of sex workers by the police marks the industry as different than other businesses. The registers of the true names and addresses of sex workers operated by the police are another form of control and regulation. This operates as a 'management tool' for the police to keep 'tabs' on particular sex workers and how and where they operate. The Massage Parlours Act 1978 states that only 'masseuses' free from drug and prostitution convictions are eligible to work in parlours. Consequently, this register operates to restrict which sex workers can work. By excluding some workers from working in massage parlours, it helps create a pool of sex workers operating from escort agencies and the streets. The register for escorts and escort agencies operates as a local initiative developed to monitor the growing escort industry. Police also take the names and addresses of street sex workers. In this way the police have records of most sex workers operating in Christchurch.

Registers operated by the police have a number of purposes. They allow the police to monitor who is operating in which area of the 'sex industry' and for which particular business. Registers allow the police to check into the histories (criminal records/police records) of sex workers as another form of intelligence gathering. In developing this closer monitoring system of sex

workers, the police are able to use this relationship to gain intelligence from sex workers on crimes and criminal networks.

Registers also operate to protect the client and the sex business from the criminal activities of a few sex workers and associates. The robbing or blackmailing of clients is harmful to all in sex businesses. A consequence of police registers is thus to make buying sexual services safer - which benefits the 'sex industry' as a whole.

Another consequence of the registration of sex workers is that of legitimisation and tolerance of sex work by the police. The closer relationship with the police can provide sex workers a channel for complaints about exploitation or physical abuse from clients or sex business owners.

This chapter concentrates on the different forms of control that sex workers face in their day to day activities. These forms of control operate both internally in the operations of sex businesses through management strategies, and externally through the registration of sex workers by the police.

Crafting the Client as Control:

New Strategies for Personalised Services

Competition between commercial sex businesses in the 'sex industry' has increased in the last seven years with the development of escort agencies. As a consequence, owners/managers of massage parlours and escort agencies have sought new ways to attract and maintain clients' loyalty. This has meant developing ways of giving the client a better service by incorporating more client choice into the way that sex work is done. Massage parlours and escort agencies achieve this goal differently; yet both forms rely heavily on the sex worker's role in creating and maintaining a more personalised relationship with the client.

The pleasures men find in commercial sex are not always able to be dealt with through quick sex (O'Connell-Davidson, 1994). For instance, the sexual

encounter, for many clients, may begin early on in the day with the decision to secure sex in response to their own personal desire (Plumridge et al, 1997a,b), and later encompass polite conversations in pleasant relaxed surroundings with the secure knowledge of sexual satisfaction, the trusted embrace of a familiar sex worker, or the excitement of physical contact with a stranger.

In the massage parlour this has led to an internal restructuring of 'work practices'. In these businesses one strategy has been to move work practices of sex workers away from a more routine process of just having sex with an assigned client, towards a more individualised and personalised form of selling sex in which sex workers are encouraged to interact and compete with each other for the client. These changes have increased the choice of the client by enabling him to choose which woman he wants to have sexual relations with. In both the massage parlour and the escort agency this has developed the client as another locus of control¹.

The Restructuring of Work Practices in the Massage Parlour

As recent as five or six years ago, massage parlours organised the sex worker-client relationship differently than they presently do. Workers and managers have described a past system based on taking 'turns' to service each new client by what could be described as a queuing system. A manager of a massage parlour describes the system:

"When I first started work there used to be a turn system, where you were allocated clients as they came in. For the lady it was first in and first dressed got the first job, that is if they (the client) didn't request a particular woman. And it worked out really fairly and with outcalls the receptionist would allocate the jobs out evenly, so everybody got work. That process has gradually changed."

In this system the client would come into the parlour, pay his money for the massage and the receptionist/manager would call through to the lounge room,

¹ See Tolich, (1996) and Austrin (1997 forth coming) for a similar process in other service industries.

where the sex workers were waiting and whichever woman whose turn it was, would come through and greet the client, then take him through to one of the private rooms. Once in the private rooms further negotiations on the sexual service would take place. In this way of organising sex work, the client had little choice over which woman he saw and little opportunity to talk with the woman before the sexual transaction.

This system has been restructured in massage parlours to offer the client more choice over the woman he wants to see. Instead of being allocated a particular sex worker, the client is given the choice of a number of women in a relaxed and 'more personal' environment. For example, one massage parlour I visited, felt as though it could have been in the lounge of a hotel or a bar in the city. In this place (others were similar, if not as 'up-market') the client enters off the street into an area where he pays the receptionist/manager for the massage. The client is then given entry into a spacious lounge area. In this particular parlour, the lounge featured a suite of leather couches and low tables to create informal enclaves for conversation. At one end of the lounge was a large and very professional-looking bar. A chalk board wine list hung on the wall by the bar, just as in a down-town licensed café. Several women stood at the bar having a drink and talking; others sat on the couch chatting over coffee. As I entered, they turned their heads and one woman moved to greet me (whether I was seen as a potential customer or some one to relieve the boredom of a quiet Saturday, I don't know). I was introduced to some of the women and I was offered a drink from the bar (not free) or a cup of coffee. The lighting in the lounge was subtle but adequate - the lounge extended away from the bar to a pool table and still other areas designed for more private conversations. The decor was a blend of pinks and greys - artistic-erotic pictures of women hung on the walls. It felt friendly and even 'normal'. With no natural light - similar to the casino environment - an atmosphere of timelessness and distance from the outside world was created.

The experience of the massage parlour visit is emphasised in these advertisements taken from The Press newspaper:

“FELICITY’S 140, Gentlemen, imagine relaxing with our gorgeous, professional ladies at our hostess bar, followed by soft lighting, pure pampering, peace, quiet and unrivalled attention in our elegantly presented premises. Appts also available by request, for those requiring discretion...

CHARLIE’S upmarket massage establishment offers theme rooms, in-house video and a selection of classy ladies. Superior sauna and spa facilities...”
 (“Massage Parlour Column” The Press, 13:5:1996, p. 50).

In this environment, the client, just as I was, is introduced to the women who are working, and is encouraged to have a drink from the bar or a cup of coffee, relax and talk with the women. During a process which is not supposed to take any longer than half an hour (according to the sign above the door) the client will talk and get to know the women and then ultimately choose someone he likes to go through to the private rooms with. This new style of organisation is called the ‘visual request system’ (or VRs). The client, instead of being allocated a sex worker, can enter the massage parlour, socialise with the women and eventually choose the one he likes the best. In the words of one manager: “...if he is paying, and if he wants a blonde over a brunette then that is his choice”.

However, in practice this system does not always have the desired effect of personalising the service. In conversations with workers, they have suggested that rather than vying for the customer’s attention, often they are confronted with the regular clients of other workers and know that that client has not come in to see them. On some occasions, workers will organise their own turn system in order to more fairly distribute clients. They achieve this by taking turns at greeting the client because they suggest that often clients will actually choose the sex worker who first talks to them. In this way sex workers can operate their own client regulating system.

As in other service industries, clients, or customers are not always liked or respected (Fine, 1996). Often I heard of clients referred to as ‘walking wallets’. In sex work not all clients are treated the same. Some workers will

'look over' any new clients before they decide whether to enter into the competition for him or not. In these ways competition is regulated in the massage parlours in part by the sex workers themselves.

Escorting as more Personalised Service

The escort system of organising prostitution has the advantage over the massage parlour in that it already involves a more personalised approach. Because the escort will come to your home or hotel room this constructs a more personalised system of sex work practice. So while massage parlours endeavour to construct a more personalised atmosphere in the massage parlour, the escort agency succeeds in this process through bringing the sexual service into the customer's home or hotel.

Private escorts that operate on their own in their private homes can offer an even more personal service. The relationship between the sex worker and the client becomes even more intimate in this style of prostitution, with some private escorts having just a handful of regular clients.

In order to personalise services even more, escort agencies tend to advertise using the individual worker names without mention of the firm they operate through. The escort agency relies on the promise of intimacy with an individual and/or the escort's particular reputation of offering a good service. Escorts are also able to market their services to particular niche markets, such as male to male services, cuddly, etc. As these advertisements from the escort column of The Press, Christchurch, represent:

JAMES and Aaron, bi male escort service available...
 JAY private escort service, \$40...
 KATHERINE'S cuddly escorts...
 KERRY, Private lady escort service...
 LISA'S bright attractive escort service...
 SABRINA, attractive new escort service...
 SARAH, a fun discreet private escort service...
 TORRI'S private strip and escort service...

However, some escort agencies employ as many as six telephone lines operating through one central agency in order to capture the client's call. These agencies will still advertise under particular individual escort workers' names capitalising on the image of individualised and personalised service.

Personal Services: Sex Workers Developing Regulars

In the visual request system the massage parlour lounge is made more like an everyday social venue. Conversations, no matter how short, are important in making the personalised link with the clients. The system is based on the worker and the client gaining some limited form of rapport. Talk then becomes a very important part of the client-sex worker transaction/negotiation/relationship process.

In this new style of work the emphasis is placed on the personality, forms of physical attractiveness, and the negotiating skills of the sex worker, unlike the turn system where workers were guaranteed a percentage of men/work/money that came through the door. The sex workers, in order to stabilise their own economic position, must build up their own regular clientele. This is in competition with other sex workers who are going about the same task. Sex workers employ different strategies for dealing with this competition. A sex worker in a massage parlour comments:

"There are ways of getting clients off, or getting them interested. You can start getting all sexy and say 'Oh, I am feeling really horny', then they feel as though they have to satisfy you. There are successful and not so successful sex workers and it can all depend on how you act. Like sometimes I really don't like the customer but I smile and am nice when I am really cursing them under my breath."

Still others sex workers may rely on the insecurity and nervousness of a first-time client and hustle him. The manager of a massage parlour tells the story:

"...there is one particular girl, a hustler, the other staff don't get a look in, like one lady who was sitting nicely chatting to a client, thinking they are getting on like a house on fire, and then she will come over and be all over him like a rash - hustle him..."

Even though escorts are not in direct competition with each other, as in the massage parlour under the 'visual request system', they are still in indirect competition with other escorts. They must also personalise the relationship between the client in order to build up regular clients. One male escort sex worker told me he created a history for his sex-working character in order to build up a rapport with the clients without giving too much of himself away. This is important in building up a regular clientele. As the male worker suggests:

"When I started working I had to choose a working name. I made up a sort of 'past' for this person too. Just a whole lot of stuff, loosely based on myself...just so you keep the story straight. Because the clients ask you all the time about yourself, what do you do when you are not working? How did you get into working? That kind of thing. It just allows me to build up that relationship with the client but without giving out too much of me."

Unlike the massage parlours, where the clients can see the person (which heavily advantages those more physically attractive), the escort must rely more strongly on creating regular customers through rapport. In this way the conversation developed in the escort-client relationship is very important for continued business. In sex work it seems, what the sex worker looks like and the way she/he acts towards the client, are both important ways of doing 'good work' in the 'sex industry'.

Therefore in both the massage parlour and escort agency, 'good sex work' is done through increasing the personalised transaction/relationship between the client and the sex worker by emphasising face-to-face exchanges between buyers and sellers - as the central way that sex is sold. In an industry which competes for a limited client dollar, developing loyal customers creates a good economic advantage for both the sex business and the sex worker.

The shift in massage parlours from a queue to a choice system changes the incentives for sex workers - making repeat business dependent on the sex workers' performance in the encounter. So too, in escort work, where competition for clients is strong, the development of a rapport with the client is

an important way that repeat custom is developed. Both of these styles of sex work organise sexual services in a personal, informal setting; the massage parlour has created lounge areas where clients and the women working can talk and drink together, while the escort is able to achieve a more personal ambience by reconstructing the brothel space in the client's home, hotel room, motel unit, or the escort's/agency's suburban house.

In this way, management can influence how sex workers behave, not by direct means aimed at the sex worker, but by changing the relationship between the sex worker and the client. Control is constructed in the sex work business, not solely through disciplinary measures of management, but through increasing the choice of the client over which woman/man they would like to be with. Read in this way, the locus of control has moved away from a centralised and hierarchical structure (although this still exists) to one which is reconstructed around the individual personal relationships which must be developed between the sex workers and the client.

Freelance Sex Work

In order to better understand the organisation of prostitution and the social and economic relations which develop between the owners/managers of commercial sex businesses, the sex workers, and their clients, a discussion of how 'money gets made' in the industry is important.

In both the massage parlour and the escort agency, the sex worker's employment relationship exhibits qualities of a freelance system, mediated by personalised and constantly re-negotiated contractual relations with the client. That is, their income is derived solely from the client paying the worker (not the business) for a sexual service. However, because sex workers operate through sex businesses, and their work behaviour directly reflects on the income of those businesses, the employee-employer relationship (as in the waged system) still exists. Thus, managerial disciplinary strategies such as

finances, bonds, and dismissal from employment for low quality service to the client are utilised as still other means of controlling sex workers' behaviour.

For those that work out of massage parlours, as noted in previous chapters, the economic transactions among the client, the massage parlour, and the sex worker are separated out because of the laws prohibiting brothel keeping, living on earnings of prostitution and procuring. This creates a quasi-freelance system for sex workers, whereby they receive all of their money directly from the client who pays the massage parlour separately. This means that the relationship between the sex worker and the client is important, and as I have shown, has become still more important with the shift from a 'turn system' to one where the client chooses the sex worker. Thus in order to stabilise her/his income, the sex worker must develop loyal customers through a more personalised relationship with them. Yet the quasi-freelance arrangement also means that sex workers must compete with each other for the client dollar and in this way not all sex workers will make money the way they did through the 'turn' system. A worker reflects on a work day:

"Where I work we have to pay a fee of \$15 a shift...(and) some days there will be four women on the shift and maybe four or five guys will come in and only two of those women will get those clients. Some of us won't even get one client. That is a waste of a day; you haven't earned any money, you have had to sit there all day waiting and still had to pay the shift fee."

Yet along with the quasi-freelance arrangement in massage parlours, management maintains certain employer discretions which operate to regulate and control the sex workers' behaviour and dress standard. Thus, read another way, the work in massage parlours is still regulated by the management, who tell the sex workers what to do, and how to do it. In this way, sex work combines both aspects of a freelance system and aspects of a disciplined employer-employee relationship.

The escort way of organising sex work has evolved a system even more like that of freelance work. Through selling the time of the escort with the client, the escort agency has endeavoured to manoeuvre around the laws on organised

prostitution. And because of the multiple sites of prostitution, escorts receive the entire sum of the transaction from the client, only later paying the escort agency business its fee. This is worked out either on a percentage basis of the full transaction or on a flat agency fee rate. This is paid to the escort agency for its 'brokerage' services - which operate to interpret the client's needs and wishes and endeavour to match him up with the sex worker that is most suitable. The difference between the escort system and the massage parlour system is that the escort business operates on a commission basis, paid by the sex worker, for each escort client transaction. This sets the escort firm up as a broker in the client-escort relationship, which increases the personalised nature of the escort-client relationship because the entire economic transaction is completed by the escort themselves. The client only deals with the sex business through the escort agency receptionist. In this way, the client can believe that his money is paying the individual escort (who advertises by individual name and not through the business name) and not subsidising the larger agency behind him/her.

Yet the escort agency still imposes fines and regulations on the sex worker for work misdemeanours; such as dress codes, lateness, not ringing through to the agency at the beginning of a job or at the end. The escort agency also attempts to control the sex worker by not allowing the escort to operate from more than one firm at a time.

In both cases, the parlour and the escort agency sex worker receive all of their money directly from repeated negotiations with the client. In sex-on-site venues such as massage parlours, the new personalised 'visual request' system has been able to exploit the 'separate transaction' system which emerged as a strategy to avoid legal prosecution. This reworking has promoted a quasi-freelance arrangement of sex work which incorporates a more personalised approach for the client. The quasi-freelance arrangement means that sex workers must compete with other sex workers for the client dollar through developing closer social relations with him.

In the escort agency the freelance arrangement is taken further. Because of the separation of the escort business from the site of sex, the visible role of the escort agency business in the sex worker-client transaction is reduced. This has benefits for both the worker and ultimately the escort business in individualising and personalising escort work.

Work in prostitution businesses has shifted from what could be termed a set of 'routine practices', where sex workers are allocated clients, through to a system where the responsibility of the client's satisfaction is taken on by the sex worker. In this process, the sex workers in both the massage parlour and the escort agency are involved in a dual system of employment. While the sex worker works for the client, he/she are still 'employed' and controlled by the sex business. The quasi-freelance system and its reliance on individual personalised services to the client, operates to control the sex worker's behaviour, yet it also operates in the sex worker's favour through assisting the development of regular clients around the sex worker rather than the sex business.

Sex Workers taking their Regular Clients with them

The irony of sex businesses increasing the personalised nature of sex work is that the regular client often becomes loyal to the worker and not the business. In this way, sex workers have a lever over the management of sex businesses. The client becomes a form of property or capital of the sex worker and can be transported to another sex business. The quasi-freelance system which contractualises and personalises the relationship between the sex worker, operates at one level to sustain the business by creating customer loyalty, yet can work in reverse for sex businesses if the sex worker shifts to another business, taking her/his clients with them. A male sex worker talked about the mobility of his clients:

“I had customers follow me from place to place and it has proved to be quite good, because from each place you pick up a couple more regular customers. Simply because your name has got a new phone number next to it.”

One way that clients follow you from agency to agency is through the newspaper, as some of these adverts in The Press newspaper represent:

LULU, ex-Charlies, now at The Carlton Lounge, love to see old clients, ph. for shift details ...

STUNNING Stella now at Candy's. Ph...

ZARA, ex-Atami, ex-Femme, now at the Carlton Lounge, phone for shift details, ...

SANDY (ex Mandy Jojos) is happily massaging at The Penthouse,...²

The parlour then has an incentive to make workers stay. One way that some of the parlour owners/managers endeavour to stabilise their staff is through charging them a bond to work in their massage parlour. If they do not give two weeks notice before leaving their job, the owners will keep the bond. However, for some workers, this attempt by owners to bond them to establishments is only a minor encumbrance. One worker I spoke with suggested that, even though she would lose her bond, it made better economic sense to shift down the road to another massage parlour that was doing better trade than wait out the two weeks and get her bond back:

“I know I am going to lose my bond, but I can make the extra \$200 in two days, and then it's all profit for me. I would be losing money if I stayed at ... for the two weeks so I could get my bond back.”

Still another lever that sex workers may employ to manoeuvre around the competition in the industry, is by seeing clients out of work time. As in other freelance business situations, client ownership can become an issue. Perhaps in order to further increase the personal nature of the relationship, the client may suggest that the worker come to his place out of work time. This is an opportunity for the worker to do the same job but make more money. Yet this

² In the process of analysing these advertisement I have taken them from many different issues of The Press newspaper. It is the similarities between these advertisements that is important rather than their particular instances on specific days and years.

can create problems if the sex business finds out. One male sex worker talks about his experiences with regular clients:

“If you have regulars then the relationship can get very strange...Before I stopped working in Christchurch, this regular, he says; “Come around out of work”. A lot of regulars say; “Well, we see each other so often why not make it out of work and then you can get all the money”...I feel really uncomfortable doing that...sort of loyalty to who I am working for...but it goes on big time with workers, they all do it, sometimes you get tempted...if the agency finds out you can be down the road.”

Managing Problems with Sex Workers

Sex businesses do not necessarily trust their sex workers to do the ‘good sex work’ that will keep the client coming back to the business. Despite the variety of the strategies explored in the previous sections, management can not ensure that this is the case. In fact, according to all the owners and managers I spoke with, sex workers are their biggest obstacle in operating successful and stable sex businesses. This is summed up in the comments of one owner of a massage parlour who said:

“My biggest problem is staffing, staffing, staffing and staffing. Getting them to turn up, getting them to be professional. Some of them turn up for work at 9.30 am when we open at 9.30 am, they aren’t dressed and ready till 10 am. Some will hurry the clients along getting them in and out of the rooms in twenty minutes when they have paid for longer, those are the kinds of unprofessional aspects that I frown on. And then once you get them right they leave or they fall in love and go off...”

Operators suggest they have a core staff of about thirty percent which stay while the other workers come and go. This, they complain, creates problems for stabilising the day-to-day operations of the business.

One contradiction of the freelance system in sex businesses is that sex workers will not always strive to work in the client’s best interest. Roberta Perkins (1991) suggests that the crux of the tension in industrial relations in the ‘sex industry’ is linked to the conflict of interest. The boss is motivated by profit, the worker by personal feelings. The owner expects the worker to see every client, unless he is diseased or violent, and is not prepared to accept her/his reluctance on grounds of physical repulsion or fatigue. The worker, on

the other hand, is motivated by the cash return from the work and also personal feelings of attraction, indifference or revulsion. This represents sex work as an occupation embedded in social and emotional factors. Sex work involves dealing with people that you do not want to deal with or that you do not like. This points to the peculiarities of prostitution as work- because in many ways it can not be separated out from the sexual and intimate context in which it is embedded.

The social stigma attached to sex work as an occupation may prevent sex workers from operating as stable employees. The social and emotional stress of entering into sexual relations with different men can create problems for many workers. Working temporarily or part-time are ways that workers are able to cope with these stresses. These are all reasons why sex workers may not always operate as full-time workers or be 'reliable' or personable to their clients.

Maintaining a Variety of Sex Workers in Sex Businesses

While sex businesses complain about the reliability of their staff, in fact the temporality and mobility of sex workers also operate in ways useful to sex businesses. Throughout the industry, there is effectively little difference in the sexual services available to men. Therefore any strategic advantage that firms have over each other, whether they be massage parlours or escort agencies, comes about through the differentiation of client services they offer. Competition between sex businesses has meant that they must offer a variety of women/men to their prospective clients. Having a range of sex workers on each shift gives the clients more choices. As managers say, some of the older clients are a bit intimidated by the beautiful young women, and prefer some one closer to their age. Others will prefer blondes, and still others brunettes. In offering more choice, the sex business can develop a clientele that is more loyal to the business. The owner of a massage parlour sets out the argument:

“It is a real problem if you only have four staff on and two don’t turn up. The clients miss out on having the variety. If you only have two ladies on and they are busy with clients then the client that comes in after that will just go down the road to another place. You lose your regular clients if you don’t have the right number of staff on”

Work rosters become an important way that operators maintain a variety of sex workers per shift. Regular shifts enable the regular client to know when particular workers are operating.

Escort agencies overcome the problem of ensuring variety by increasing the number of hours that each sex worker is on call. Escorts that work from home may be available all day and night. One escort told me that he worked ‘all hours’ and still only averaged about two clients a day.

However, certain contradictions are involved in seeking to ensure a variety of sex workers are available and in seeking to strengthen the worker-client relationship. A client-centred approach redirects the attention of the client away from the business and on to the individual sex worker. Through this system, the business can get the sex worker to operate more to the client’s benefit and hence build up business. But by attracting regular clients to sex businesses, through offering low prices, a diversity of services, or a variety of women, it seeks to displace the individual sex worker as the focus of the regular client’s attention. Sex businesses then undermine the client’s attachment to one particular worker through developing client attachment to the business which offers a variety of good sex workers at reasonable prices.

Yet the sex worker must still provide a good service in order to get the client to return. Because of the privacy of the sexual service, management find it difficult to monitor the behaviour of sex workers once they are in private with the client. Evidence of a client’s choice then becomes one way managers can monitor the sex worker-client relationship.

Management Tools for Sex Worker Control

Maintaining a register of the sex worker's 'jobs'; recording whether they were requested personally by the client or whether they were by sight (visual request), helps, according to management, to monitor the private activities of the sex worker-client contract. This can work in both the massage parlour and the escort agency where the sexual service (the product) purchased by the client happens in private away from management supervision.

Management suggest that they can not rely on the client to complain about the service. He is likely to just try another sex business. The owner of a massage parlour recounts the use and benefits of a record keeping system:

"We have a good reputation for service and hygiene, style and intelligent personable ladies. Sometimes it is hard to make sure the ladies are doing a good job, unless you go through to the room with the lady, it is hard to know. I mean you don't know how she is in there. Like there is one lady who I adore as a person, highly intelligent, gifted, arty, divine to look at, gets not one request ever.

The requests tell us whether the ladies are doing well, like if they keep getting requested you know they are doing well. And if they are not getting requested, after a few months you will go and have a chat with them. I ask if there are any problems or do they need help with anything. That is where some of the older ladies can also help out, because they are so experienced. It can be good for new ladies to talk with the more experienced ones. ... so it is quite a good system... you can keep really close tabs on your staff. I mean requests are your bread and butter."

One owner of a massage parlour told me that if talking to the workers did not help, she would get a male friend to pose as a 'dummy' client and go through to the room with the woman. He would then report back to the owner what he thought the problems in the service were.

Records of the staff are kept as another way of documenting the behaviour of sex workers. These, as this manager suggests, can operate as effective disciplining tools:

"At work everything is recorded, we have a sheet for each lady which gets filled out everyday. It has a comments column on the side. The receptionists comments are put in there. Things like, if some one is late, or didn't come in. It is very helpful because then you can keep track of the staff, like you can show them that they have been late six times this month or whatever, and you have been sick four times in the last two weeks. Everything gets recorded on

the personal sheet, and if there are complaints from clients that goes in as well."

In summary, management controls over the behaviour of sex workers in massage parlours and escort agencies have expanded to include the client as a form of monitoring and motivation in the practice of doing 'good sex work'. In these ways, both the visual request system in the massage parlour and the decentralised system of prostitution, organised through escort agencies, have created another layer of monitoring which subjects workers to overlapping systems of sanctions imposed by and between the firm and the client (Gottfried, 1992). This allows sex businesses to develop methods of control which link the discipline of sex workers to client choice.

Doing 'good sex work' means that sex workers must foster a more personalised relationship with the client to ensure his return custom for both her/his own income and that of the sex business. The development of an individualised service creates opportunities for management to supervise the sex worker's behaviour with the client through recording the worker's ability to attract repeat customers. Yet a more personal relationship with the client also operates in the sex worker's interest by ensuring a regular supply of customers and thus income and if the worker decides to shift businesses the clients may follow him/her to the new establishment.

The controls over sex workers' behaviour, operating through sex businesses which I have described, are not the only ways that prostitutes activities are organised and monitored. The police use forms of control over sex workers which operate both externally from the sex business and yet influences the ways those businesses operate and the behaviour of sex workers.

The Registration of Sex Workers by the Police

The registration of sex workers by the police operates at a formal level through the Massage Parlours Act 1978, and informally through the police registration of escorts wanting to advertise in the local newspaper.

The Massage Parlours Act 1978 states that all masseuses (sex workers) operating in massage parlours are required to have their true names and addresses recorded in a ledger kept in the massage parlour and open for police inspection. Periodically police enter into the massage parlours and check their registers against their own records.

In order to work in a massage parlour 'masseuses' must be free from drug and soliciting convictions (s. 35, Massage Parlours Act 1978). Masseuses are 'checked out' with the police prior to their employment. Managers/owners will ring up the detective involved with vice to inquire about the suitability of a prospective masseuse; the detective looks up the name of the 'masseuse' on the Wanganui computer to check him/her out. The police will ring the parlour back and simply reply that the 'masseuse' is 'acceptable' or 'not acceptable'. This is a decision which determines whether the person can work as a legally registered 'masseuse' or not.

An informal register in Wellington, Palmerston North and Christchurch operates to register escort agencies and escorts working in escort agencies who wish to advertise in the newspapers (as noted in Chapter Three). This is an informal strategy developed by local police and has no formal legislative jurisdiction. In Auckland and Dunedin, for example, markets for escorts are un-regulated by the police, and in some cases so too are massage parlours. As one worker commented:

"I worked for a couple of places up there (Auckland) they did not even ask me for my real name, let alone an address. I don't know if they even had a ledger for names and address like we do here (Christchurch)".

How Registers Operate to Discipline Workers

Austrin and Phibbs (1996) have argued that registers can act as management tools. In Christchurch the formal and informal registration of sex workers can be read as a management tool through which the police can utilise their limited resources to monitor and control the activities of sex workers in escort agencies, massage parlours and on the streets.

The informal registration of escort agencies allows the police to monitor the burgeoning escort industry. The expansion of the 'sex industry' through escort agencies operating from multiple sites in the suburbs, reduces the physical ability of the police to monitor sex workers through visiting the sex businesses. In this way, registers operated through advertising links, allow police some ability to manage a dispersed population of workers. As a Christchurch police detective suggests:

"The registration of sex workers is the only thing I can put on them that doesn't come back, it is the only way I have any control over them."

Police endeavour to construct such control over sex workers for a number of reasons. It has been suggested that sex workers visiting the homes of clients have used this as a means of 'casing' houses for burglaries. A representative from The Press said that the police had told him that:

"...there are a few unscrupulous or unsavoury types attracted to the industry and they are carrying on illegal acts, in other words the escort would come around to your place and later that night, or the next day you would be burgled."

In this way, registers allow sex workers to be traced quickly if there are complaints of theft. The fact that sex workers know that they are registered can also operate as a disincentive to engage in illegal activities because of their ability to be easily linked to the events.

The registration of massage parlour sex workers was a strategy incorporated into the Massage Parlours Act 1978 which was designed as one way of keeping illegal drugs, young women (under 18 years of age) and, ironically,

prostitution out of massage parlours. The consequences of this registration have been to force those workers not legally able to work from massage parlours into either escort agencies or onto the streets. These can be less safe environments for sex workers to operate from. In this way, another consequence of registration has been the creation of unregistered markets for massage parlour sex workers. I have heard that in Christchurch some parlours will actually employ masseuses who are unable to legally operate, either because workers have prosecutions or are under age. This can increase the sex worker's vulnerability to exploitation of clients and massage parlour owners because they know that the sex worker will not go to the police.

Seen in this way, police regulate who can operate in the market for jobs in the massage parlours (Robinson, 1987). Registers regulate the labour supply through determining who can work and where they work in the industry. This can encourage some people to embark upon careers in prostitution or force them to move into un-regulated/un-registered areas. One sex worker I spoke with said that she had been prohibited from working in massage parlours for ten years because of a conviction for cannabis. In this way, registers can help to determine in which segment of the industry workers are registered to work in, thus creating a basis for a career in a particular branch of the industry. Put another way, it can severely limit the sex worker's employment mobility.

The informal and formal registration of sex workers by the police also constructs a protected and registered labour supply for massage parlours and escort agencies, creating a population of workers who have been registered and vetted by the police. This relieves owners and managers from the problems of relying on the worker's honesty. They know that workers who are registered with the police are free from convictions. The registration and vetting of sex workers by the police can operate to provide safeguards for owners/managers of commercial sex establishments in that they are able to trace workers if there are any economic problems, such as sex workers owing the sex business money. For example, it deters workers from stealing from the

clients. This protects the safe reputation of the sex business itself and the industry as a whole.

The official police reason given for the informal registration of escort sex workers is that it benefits the worker's safety. Police say that registration operates in the escort worker's best interests, offering protection through surveillance (Walker, 1992), in a segment of the industry which is otherwise spatially dispersed with an associated increased risk of violence and exploitation to the worker (Robinson, 1987, Jordan, 1991, Jordan, 1992). This means that if sex workers go missing in association with their work, then police have their true names and addresses to begin an investigation. This added safeguard to sex workers, through police surveillance, is one way that registers serve a useful function for the 'sex industry' as a whole, as well as the police.

Other reasons that police support registration is that registration acts as another tool in the constant search for 'intelligence' on crime and 'criminals'. While many sex workers don't have criminal records or links to people operating illegal activities, some do. Through registration, police can access the criminal records and police files of sex workers and their connections. Through this process they can piece together networks of associations with other crimes or criminal activities which sex workers may be involved in, or have knowledge of, or personal associations with. In this way, registers operate as ways in which police can gain access to information on criminal activities and criminal networks.

Because most illegal activities are carried out discretely, registers are ways that increase the interaction of the police with sex workers (and/or their connections) through which a process of information sharing or deals can take place. As Rubenstein (1973) suggests, the steadiest source of information the police get is what they receive for allowing people to operate without arrest. He cites a police officer who says:

"...prostitutes ...are good. If you treat 'em right, they will give you what you want. They don't want to get locked up, and you can trade that off for information"(Rubenstein, 1973, p.207).

Even in Christchurch, with its reputation for police tolerance of sex workers, there is the potential for police to make deals with sex workers for information. The mention of an Inland Revenue Department or Social Welfare benefit fraud investigation, by the police, to sex workers, could be enough to secure some form of cooperation or information-sharing. Given the ambiguous legal situation of sex work and sex businesses, any police attention would be threatening and fertile ground for information-sharing in return for being left alone.

One instance of police and Department of Social Welfare (DSW) information-sharing happened several years ago when the police opened the sex work registers to the DSW benefit fraud team. On this occasion, armed with nine entry warrants and accompanied by the police, this DSW team went around a number of massage parlours in the city talking with the women and the owners and managers about working as masseuses and being on DSW benefits. They took copies of the names in the massage parlour ledgers and ran them through the computers checking their names against those on DSW benefits. Such memories are still fresh in a number of sex workers' minds - a similar threat in the future is not completely out of the question.

Summary

In conclusion, sex work and sex workers are open to many forms of regulation and control. These operate internally through the sex business - as massage parlours develop new systems to deal with the increased competition of prostitution markets by drawing in the client as a monitor and regulator of sex work. This new system then creates new ways of monitoring sex worker's behaviour and performance.

The system offers new and important means for massage parlours to discipline sex workers. Owners/managers transfer the disciplining of sex workers on to clients by enabling them to choose between sex workers. The success of this new system of operating depends upon the performance of the sex workers who must gain some form of rapport with the client so that he will repeatedly choose them. This opens up the sex worker to a new form of control in the sex business. This in turn creates a form of self-disciplining where sex workers, in order to gain a personalised relationship with the client, must compete for the client with other sex workers.

In this system sex work becomes more like freelance work. Sex workers no longer have certainty over their income, but must compete with other workers for the client's dollar. This means that sex workers, both in the massage parlour and in the escort agency, must augment their services to their male clients to include more than just the routine sexual service. In massage parlours this is done by constructing a more client-centred environment where men are given the choice of women they want.

In escort agencies the organisational style of constructing the brothel in the client's home or hotel has personalisation built in. Nevertheless, escort workers must work hard at building up regular clients through offering personal services. In both the massage parlour and the escort agency, this increases the importance of face-to-face conversations and rapport-building in modern sex work.

Yet the irony in this new system is that through their stronger link with the client, sex workers can take their regular clients with them to new sex businesses, or alternatively, see them outside of work time - in this latter situation they can make more money doing the same work.

Nevertheless, managerial supervision has shifted to incorporate the clients as a form of monitoring and surveillance (Tolich, 1996). In effect, control and monitoring have been partially dispersed and located in the hands of the customer. This is a management strategy whereby the client's decisions and

choices are recorded in ledgers and used to monitor the performance of the sex worker.

Yet these are not the only forms of control operating on sex workers. Police registration of sex workers operates in all levels of the 'sex industry', legally through the Massage Parlours Act 1978 in the massage parlours, and informally through advertising links with the local newspaper. Street workers are probably most vulnerable to police attention and monitoring.

Registers operate, in many ways to benefit police in their attempts to manage 'sex industry' personnel. Probably the two most important ways they operate for police is firstly, as a monitoring system in order to keep track of a burgeoning and dispersed escort industry. In this way, any criminal activity involving sex workers or those linked with them can be monitored through these registers. Secondly, police registration brings sex workers and police in closer contact, and gives the police opportunity to gain information about criminal activities and criminals who may be associated with 'sex industry' personnel. The insecure legal position of sex workers operating in an underground economy can be used by the police to invoke information from them. These links help police develop networks of information and build up a picture of criminal activity networks. However, they also operate to provide benefits to stabilise the 'sex industry's' reputation by helping to safeguard the safety of the client.

While these forms of control and monitoring operate in the modern 'sex industry', the New Zealand Government has not seen them as effective ways of monitoring and educating sex workers in the wake of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Instead the Ministry of Health decided to fund an organisation made up largely of sex workers to educate, support and monitor the sexual practices and sexual health of 'sex industry' personnel. The next chapter examines the creation and operation of the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective, and endeavours to locate its successful operation in the 'sex

industry' through its ambiguous position as both state-funded health provider and grass roots 'sex industry' representative.

CHAPTER FIVE

“HEALTHY HOOKERS¹” : THE NEW ZEALAND PROSTITUTES’ COLLECTIVE, THE STATE, AND THE HIV VIRUS IN THE PROCESS OF REFRAMING PROSTITUTION

In New Zealand prostitution is legal, while soliciting is not. This means that while it is legal to be a prostitute, it is illegal to solicit custom for those services. As I have discussed in previous chapters, these contradictions in the law, and the way they are enforced, offer both constraints and opportunities to owners of sex businesses, sex workers and clients. Massage parlours have become a quasi-legal form of selling sex through the Massage Parlours Act 1978. Escort agencies, through police registration, have become tolerated. These ambiguous spaces offer potential alliances between brothel owners, sex workers and state organisations, prompting new forms of social organisation and new forms of governance in the ‘sex industry’. It is with these relations in mind that I now look at the emergence and operations of the New Zealand Prostitutes’ Collective, and the alliances that have developed through its quest for a healthier, safer and decriminalised ‘sex industry’. The pursuit of these agendas has been successfully played out through the sometimes contradictory spaces opened up by government responses to the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

Organisations for supporting prostitutes and promoting their rights have become established internationally over the last two decades, including groups in the United States (1973), Canada, England, France (1975), Australia (1983) and New Zealand (1987). The aims of these different organisations has been the abolition of legislation which discriminates against women and men who work as prostitutes. A new image of prostitution has emerged to challenge

¹ The term “Healthy Hookers” is taken from the article “The Healthy Hooker” by Catherine Healy and Anna Reed, in New Internationalist, no. 252, February, 1994.

traditional views of prostitutes as social misfits, sexual slaves, drug addicts, victims of pimps, or casualties of organised crime. Prostitution has become *sex work*, prostitutes have become *sex workers* (Jenness, 1990, 1993). With the reframing of prostitution as work, sex workers have demanded the same rights and obligations as other workers (Jenness, 1993; McLeod, 1982; Van Der Poel, 1995). Many have aligned themselves with liberal feminist arguments based on the centrality of a woman's right to choose the way she uses her body (Jordan, 1992).

The HIV and AIDS pandemic represents the most recent and dramatic change in the political environment of prostitutes' rights groups, and has significantly reshaped the political strategies of these groups, reworking their feminist discourses to include public health discourses (Jenness 1993). A new discourse of 'risk groups' evolved in the HIV and AIDS crisis as particular populations were targeted as 'contagious'; in particular, gay men, prostitutes, and intravenous drug users (Lichtenstein, 1996). Prostitutes were characterised in this discourse as a primary bridge through which AIDS could be transmitted into the heterosexual population (Jenness, 1993). The connection was in the possible transmission of the HIV virus from intravenous drug use, through sex work, to the heterosexual male population.

HIV and AIDS education and support for sex workers have therefore become important ways in which prostitutes' rights groups have been able to attract funding. This has sometimes been at the expense of existing work on the legal and industrial rights of sex workers (Murray and Robinson 1996; Jenness, 1993). While the pandemic posed a potential ideological, social and legal threat to prostitutes' rights groups in this way, it has also provided an extraordinary impetus to the organisation of marginalised groups such as prostitutes. It has enabled them to organise at a 'grassroots' level, opening up new spaces for funding for their organisations, and offering alternative identities for their members (Altman, 1994). In this chapter, I will argue that the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective (NZPC) has been able to take

advantage of government concerns about HIV and AIDS in New Zealand, and enter into a contractual relationship with Regional Health Authorities² to provide 'safer sex' information and support to 'sex industry' personnel.

By the time the AIDS crisis received public recognition in New Zealand, 'risk groups' such as gay men and intravenous drug users had already demonstrated the ability and motivation to successfully organise and support their communities, both with and without the help of government funding. In 1987 there were increasing calls for the 'sex industry' to be represented on various HIV and AIDS committees in the community which advised the Minister of Health. The state's commitment to addressing the HIV and AIDS crisis created an infrastructure centred on HIV transmission prevention which linked government, medical, public health and community groups. While moves to create a prostitutes' rights organisation were already in progress in Wellington, the funding provided by Regional Health Authorities gave a significant impetus to the development of this organisation. Subsequent government funding has enabled the NZPC to appoint paid coordinators and set up community centres in seven cities around New Zealand.

This chapter examines the positions simultaneously held by the NZPC as both government funded health educators, and a 'grassroots' community-based organisation working for the health and human rights of 'sex industry' personnel. In this discussion, I will draw on interviews with the Coordinator of the Christchurch branch of the NZPC, National Coordinator of the NZPC, newspaper and television articles in which the NZPC has appeared, and my own everyday experiences of the way the Christchurch branch of the NZPC operates. In order to understand the position from which the NZPC works, I

² Throughout this chapter I have used the term Regional Health Authorities to refer to the different and changing (due to the health reforms) government funding bodies through which the NZPC has negotiated contracts. The 1988 contract was negotiated between the NZPC and the Minister of Health. Since then NZPC contracts have been negotiated through The Public Health Commission and now are administered by the Regional Health Authorities.

will discuss events leading to the formation of a state funded organisation for prostitutes. These events had the potential to both constrain, and to provide opportunities for sex workers interested in supporting the health and safety of others in the industry. On the one hand, being solely funded by Regional Health Authorities creates dependence on those departments and their agendas, giving a branch of the state access to an otherwise clandestine population. At another level, it also offered sex workers a unique opportunity to educate and support the rights of sex workers in the community.

I will argue that this ambiguous position has enabled the NZPC to move amongst the many different government and non-government groups, and work with these groups' agendas. On the basis of their position, and through the motivation of its staff, the NZPC has successfully operated education programs on HIV and AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STD), supported sex workers rights, and lobbied parliament for the decriminalisation of 'sex industry' laws. The NZPC utilises this position at both a local and a national level.

Locally, the Christchurch branch of the NZPC operates outreach programmes which involve visiting massage parlours and street workers, distributing condoms and other safer sex equipment, giving sexual health advice, and distributing the NZPC national magazine, SIREN (Sex Industry Rights and Education Network). Outreach allows the NZPC to fulfil its Regional Health Authority contracts of STD, HIV and AIDS education while also enabling the Christchurch Coordinator to gather information about the everyday problems and issues faced by sex workers. At a national level, the NZPC must negotiate further future contracts with the Government. It must organise the many NZPC community groups around the country, and act as a source of support and advice. An important task of the National Coordinator is to act as an adviser to government and non-government committees. This job also entails advocating sex workers' health and safety issues through the media.

The NZPC recruits support from political and community groups in order to lobby government to change the laws governing prostitution. They argue that these laws are not only an infringement of sex workers human rights, but that such legislation inhibits safer sex education and practice amongst sex workers, owners/managers and clients of the 'sex industry'. In this way NZPC has been able to capitalise on the popular/medical discourses that link prostitution with health concerns; they have replaced the idea of the 'prostitute as a vector of AIDS' with new stories of the 'Healthy Hooker'. This reframing of prostitutes as guardians of safer sex in the heterosexual population links up with the general reframing of prostitutes as sex workers. This reframing shifts prostitution away from its association with disease, and the prostitute away from a criminal identity. Consequently, the shift from 'criminal' to 'worker' opens up opportunities for citizen rights and entitlements campaigns. In this way, the NZPC has linked the politics of prostitution as 'work' with the new politics of AIDS.

The sometimes contradictory position of the NZPC has enabled a dialogue between government and non-government organisations and sex workers and the 'sex industry', giving sex workers more access to both government and non-government groups. The Christchurch branch of the NZPC deals continually with local newspapers, the police, community groups, and politicians in order to educate and create support for the legal and human rights of sex workers. While the NZPC rejects the need for the current laws governing prostitution activities and the enforcement of those laws by the police, it must still maintain a working relationship with the local police - at present there is little other recourse open to them for dealing with violent or exploitative clients and owners of sex businesses. In this process, the NZPC negotiates a fine line between operators of sex businesses (who allow the NZPC access to their workers), sex workers and the police.

At the same time, non-health related government departments have benefited from the NZPC's position as advocate for 'sex industry' personnel.

The NZPC has worked closely with the Inland Revenue Department to ensure it understands and takes into account the complexities of 'sex industry' workers employment. In Christchurch, the NZPC has worked with representatives from the Social Welfare Department in order to create strategies to better deal with the rights of sex workers on DSW benefits. In this way, the NZPC operates as a broker to an otherwise clandestine 'sex industry' population. At both the local and national level therefore, the NZPC has to weave a path through various groups' agendas in order to maintain its own agendas of a safer, less exploitative 'sex industry'.

This chapter, then, characterises the NZPC as having to balance all these agendas in its involvement with state agencies, non-government bodies and the sex working population. Yet it is precisely this position which allows the NZPC to operate so successfully in supporting sex workers health and education at both a local and national level. It enables the NZPC to offer a coherent and strong argument to both the media and to politicians that laws governing the 'sex industry' operate to inhibit the health and safety of 'sex industry' personnel, and that a decriminalised system would be a safer and healthier environment for all.

Shining in the Shadows: The State, AIDS, and the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective

Opening up Political Opportunities for the Organisation of Prostitutes'

Rights

After 1984, the new Labour Government responded to concerns about the HIV and AIDS crisis by developing a program centred on viral transmission prevention, and set about promoting intersectorial collaboration. A partnership model emerged linking government, medical, health, and community groups such as sex workers, gays, and injecting drug users (Davis and Lichtenstein,

1996). This resulted in significant funding to the major 'risk groups' after 1985 (Lichtenstein, 1996). By 1987, there was an infrastructure of groups around HIV and AIDS which had developed. At this time media coverage linking AIDS with prostitution heightened public concerns over the spread of the virus to the heterosexual population (Lichtenstein, 1996), and provided another impetus for the creation of a sex workers' representative body to counter these scurrilous media claims (Chetwynd, 1996).

By the end of 1987, prostitutes had begun meeting in pubs, private homes, massage parlours, and on the street to discuss forming an organisation specific to the needs of 'sex industry' workers (Jordan, 1992). Of concern were issues of AIDS prevention, the legal rights of sex workers, and the social stigma surrounding their work.

"I'd always thought a union was needed. After eight years in the 'sex industry', forming the collective, although not a union, seemed like a positive step forward towards empowerment for sex workers" (Sarah, founding member, NZPC, cited in Jordan 1991, p.271).

Increasing calls for representation of sex workers on various HIV and AIDS related committees, such as the AIDS Advisory Committee, led to discussions between two Wellington based sex workers and the Minister of Health. The aims of these discussions were to set up an organisation to advocate sex workers rights and support and educate them in the practices of safer sex (Chetwynd, 1996).

The Regional Health Authorities recognised that the most efficient way of accessing the sex working population was through the cooperation of people working in the industry (Chetwynd, 1996). This has proved the most effective and least expensive option for other governments also (Altman, 1994). Yet, as Murray and Robinson (1996) point out, despite the rhetoric of community group partnerships, AIDS funding usually comes with conditions to discourage advocacy and lobbying, and preserve the status quo. This can be achieved through channelling funds into HIV and AIDS programmes which do not incorporate the agendas of the funded group.

The National Coordinator of the NZPC suggests that some negotiation has taken place with funding bodies to ensure that HIV and AIDS work did not completely dominate the operations of the Collective³ (personal communication), as had happened in America (Jenness, 1993, Weitzer 1991), Amsterdam (Van der Poel, 1995) and in some respects, Australia (Murray 1997). Those interested in organising a collective were committed to the view (generally the same as overseas prostitutes' rights groups) that sex workers should have the same occupational, health and safety rights as other workers, as well as legal rights consistent with the decriminalisation of the 'sex industry' (Chetwynd 1996).

Nevertheless, a more immediate problem for sex workers was a growing public concern about links between the HIV virus and prostitution which could seriously reduce the number of clients seeking sexual services, and in turn, greatly affect the livelihood of sex workers (Chetwynd, 1996).

"AIDS, of course, was something we had all heard about. Our wallets were beginning to register its effects..." (NZPC, in Jordan, 1991, p.271)

Thus, there was a need to respond to the inaccurate articles that were beginning to appear in the media suggesting that prostitutes were a major source of the spread of HIV and AIDS (Chetwynd, 1996). This was discouraging clients as well as increasing the stigma of the sex worker (NZPC, in Jordan, 1991). In the 'sex industry', HIV and AIDS represented both a public health crisis and an occupational crisis. What existed for the state as a public health issue also existed for sex workers as a work and marketing issue. The state's public health concerns provided an opportunity to redress negative media coverage in the drive to educate the public about HIV and AIDS.

³ An advocacy role was included in the early contracts between the Minister of Health and the NZPC, but it has been removed or reworded in subsequent contracts to 'provide advice'. It can be argued that the Government realised that advocacy could include advocating against government policies.

The decision of the Labour Government to support grassroots programs for the prevention of HIV and AIDS opened up new possibilities for prostitutes' collective action. While HIV and AIDS related issues could have been dealt with by other groups, such as the police or public health nurses, sex workers were already motivated by the needs of their community (which means they often work very hard for little or no money) and had the connections and determination to operate an effective and efficient support and educational service.

The political opportunities (McAdam et al., 1996) provided by the Government and developed out of the HIV and AIDS crisis, provided funding for a collective of prostitutes to organise and provide information and education to the 'sex industry' nationwide. However, the collective of prostitutes also incorporated other agendas, such as the reframing of prostitution as work, and prostitutes as sex workers - moving prostitution from a world of crime and social deviance to one of work which allowed them to claim the citizenship rights of other workers. Furthermore, the Prostitutes' Collective, and its safer sex message, were able to operate as a quality control mechanism in the market for sexual services. Through research on the sexual health practices of sex workers, and through positioning sex workers in the media as 'professionals about health', they have been able to calm clients' fears about the risks of HIV infection in the 'sex industry'.

The State and the NZPC: Organisation and Operation

Government funding has enabled the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective to expand from its initial Wellington base of concerned sex workers and become a nationwide representative of 'sex industry' issues. It has now expanded to establish seven branches throughout New Zealand. In order to do this the Collective needed to find and employ coordinators to set up drop-in centres. It is the coordinators job to make contact and build trusting relationships with 'sex industry' personnel, with the intention of compiling and distributing

information to those working in the 'sex industry' (Chetwynd, 1996). This has been achieved largely through informal networks - for instance the Christchurch Coordinator of the NZPC was contacted through her association with the AIDS Foundation.

The Collective endeavours to make decisions collectively (Chetwynd, 1996). The seven NZPC offices around the country are often in contact with each other. Ideally when important decisions have to be made coordinators consult with each other, and the national coordinator. They also have held a Hui to discuss past and future events, and strategies for action around the politics of sex work and sex workers.

However, the more formal structure of the organisation appears more hierarchical. The Regional Health Authorities allocate funds to the Collective. By request of these bodies, the NZPC is registered as a Charitable Trust. The Trust Board consists of people with sex work experience, academics and members of other community groups. In the final analysis, the Collective is responsible to the Trust Board (Chetwynd, 1996), and it is the Trust Board which takes responsibility for major financial decisions, appointments of staff, and the formulation of organisational aims and goals. The creation of the Charitable Trust and the Trust Board reduces the co-optation of the organisation by individuals and offers the Regional Health Authorities channels of accountability. Because the Collective is relatively small, the management systems are reasonably informal and so there is an overlap between key members of the Collective and the Trust board. In this way, the organisation of the NZPC incorporates both collective decision making from the 'grassroots' level and a bureaucratised system of funding and accountability required by its state funding bodies.

In Wellington, the National Coordinator and spokesperson for the Prostitutes' Collective oversees all the activities of the regional centres. This involves the support and provision of resources to community bases with visits to those bases when needed. Her work also involves liaising with the

Government on issues and policy advice concerning the 'sex industry', and the representation of sex workers on national committees. Similarly, the preparation of 'press releases' and representation of NZPC's views to the national media are other aspects of the National Coordinators job.

The production and distribution of SIREN, a national magazine for sex workers, also takes place in Wellington. This magazine is important in the diffusion of information about the latest developments in safer sex, as well as the legal rights of sex workers, and general information and support for 'sex industry' personnel.

The Christchurch Branch of the NZPC

In each community centre, there is a paid coordinator who makes many of the day to day decisions involved in their operation; representation on local committees, volunteer recruiting, dealing with issues and problems that arise, and local media relations.

The Christchurch branch of the NZPC began in 1988. Initially the Coordinator operated out of her home having a separate phone and fax line, and holding meetings around the dining room table. Her 18 years of experience and knowledge of the Christchurch 'sex industry' makes her a highly qualified coordinator. This experience gives her a large network of 'sex industry' connections, coupled with the respect that only years of experience in any profession can bring. Nevertheless, she speaks about the suspicions and distrust that initially needed to be overcome for the NZPC to operate successfully in Christchurch:

"When we first started the Collective I had already been working for 15 years, I knew a lot of the workers and bosses in the industry, but it was still really difficult at the beginning. There was a lot of suspicion and thoughts that we were some sort of union. That came mostly from the owners, but some of the workers too, even though we went to great pains to explain that we weren't. ...It was like 'Oh, my god, the Prostitutes' Collective, it must be like some Union or something. Do we have to join?'

But we kept going and talking to them, and they liked the magazine, (SIREN) and they liked the Ugly Mugs book (a continually updated book of names and descriptions of clients who have violated workers in some way) because it was

an avenue through which people could complain, something that people could see that we were doing for them.

I think both the workers' and the owners' attitudes have changed over the years. I think they are a lot more open about the 'sex industry' and us. Now we ring up and say: 'Hi, it's the NZPC here', and they go, 'Oh Hi, how's it going.'"

Even though the NZPC has been able to draw on networks of connections in the industry there has still been suspicions that the Collective was a union for sex workers. This came especially from some owners of sex business who saw the Collective as a possible threat to their operations, inciting sex workers to make demands upon them and potentially increasing government or industrial regulation of the industry.

However, one of the best things the Christchurch branch did, they suggest, was to have a parlour owners meeting. This was in response to a period of intensive police activity in the 'sex industry' when a number of arrests for soliciting and brothel keeping were made. The Coordinator says:

"We decided that we would call this meeting for all the parlour owners so that we could share information and think about what would be the right thing to do. It did a lot for our public relations with the owners. A couple of them came up after and said that it was so good that you work for us too. And you are concerned about us and not just against us."

Some sex workers were also concerned with potential unionisation in the 'sex industry', and the associated issues of membership and union fees payable. Workers were also concerned that an increased emphasis on work and the normalisation of prostitution would prompt taxation. Forms of economic regulation are of concern to sex workers because tax is not always paid on the earnings of sex work, and the back payment of such would be financially crippling for most workers. Similarly, some sex workers are on DSW benefits and also working as prostitutes - mostly the money earned from sex work is not declared to Income Support. These issues underline how the legally ambiguous position held by 'sex industry' workers can be used by them as well as against them. It is also for these reasons, though, that 'sex

industry' personnel were initially wary of moves by the NZPC to operate an education and support network in Christchurch.

The Collective has allayed many workers' concerns by developing a good profile in the sex working community. In Christchurch, as in the other community centres in New Zealand, they operate a drop-in centre where information and support is available, as well as condoms and lubricant supplies. A needle and syringe exchange programme is also offered in some of the centres, as is a clinic to provide free health examinations (Chetwynd, 1996). The NZPC holds information on health problems, such as suspected pregnancy and can refer workers to sympathetic doctors and other professionals. Where possible, it assists workers with legal problems; those arrested or harassed by police; workers who are wanting legal referrals, or information on the law and their legal rights. They have information for new workers entering the industry on safer sex procedures such as how to use condoms, and legal 'tips' on how to 'work' within the law. In Christchurch, they talk to new workers about their options of where to work in the 'sex industry'. Occasionally, they are called upon to deal with problems between owners/managers and sex workers, and they also liaise with government departments such as the Inland Revenue Department and the Social Welfare Department (discussed later in this chapter).

The Christchurch Collective operates an 'outreach program' twice a week, where members of the collective visit individual parlours distributing condoms, lube and other safer sex equipment. The Coordinator and a volunteer do outreach to the parlours. This is a good time for talking to sex workers, receptionists, managers and owners about the ongoing and everyday issues and problems of working in the 'sex industry'. Acquaintances can be renewed, troubles talked about, and information disseminated. The Christchurch Coordinator comments:

"I have realised its importance in keeping me in touch with what is going on in the parlours. It helps a lot that I have worked for 18 years. I often run into people I have worked with back somewhere else, and they are always pleased

to see that I am still working. Because there is still this perception from some that the people in the Collective haven't worked, the fact that most of us have worked or are working helps to dispel those fears."

Connections in the industry are an important resource NZPC staff use in gaining the trust of sex workers and owners, and dispelling some of the fears they have about the role of the NZPC. It is also through these connections that the NZPC in Christchurch finds out what is happening in the 'sex industry'. Therefore the 'out-reach' programme, while fulfilling a very important health and safety function, also allows NZPC staff to spend time in the parlours, drawing on their knowledge, experience, and network of friends to gain information about troubles and issues in the industry.

Similarly, the NZPC in Christchurch operates outreach to the street sex workers. They collect and passes out new information for the Ugly Mugs booklet. A supportive doctor accompanies to write out condom prescriptions for workers and answers any health related questions. The NZPC in Christchurch also works hard to maintain links with escort workers who can easily be reached on the telephone. In this way, the NZPC endeavours to cut across the different arenas for sex work. At times, though, this can be difficult because of the tensions and competition between these different sectors of the industry.

At both a national and local level, the NZPC weaves a path between being a state funded health provider and being a 'grassroots' sex worker community group. Having the government as the NZPC's sole funding agency has obvious problems; if funding is reduced or cut completely, it is doubtful the NZPC could survive. This funding has, however, enabled the NZPC to open in seven centres around New Zealand and to operate successfully in representing issues around sex workers' health and rights. The NZPC occupies a position which incorporates aspects of a union; helping sex workers deal with exploitative or violent employers, being a 'new social movement' representing the legal and human rights of a stigmatised minority group, and

being an adviser on 'sex industry' health policy. These ambiguities enable the NZPC to simultaneously serve their own agendas of supporting sex workers, as well as complying with the agendas of various government bodies.

Positioning the Sex Worker: Ambiguity and Authority

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the Regional Health Authorities enlisted the help of sex workers to monitor the role of prostitution in the transmission of the HIV virus, and to operate educational campaigns to help slow the pace of virus transmission in the 'sex industry' community. Through this process, government officials interested in HIV and AIDS have become dependent on the NZPC for their access to those who work in the 'sex industry'. As the Coordinator suggests:

"... we are the only people that can actually access the sex working community...professional sex workers anyway...this is why we have not run into any problems with our funding, whereas other organisations have to compete with other groups."

The NZPC has just negotiated funding for the next three years, in the face of ever decreasing funding for community groups (Chetwynd, 1996). Steady state funding is contingent on concerns about HIV and AIDS in New Zealand and the NZPC's ability to access sex workers.

Central to the NZPC's legitimacy is its ability to promote and sustain the perception that it is an organisation made up of sex workers who support and educate others in the 'sex industry'. Because prostitution is a stigmatised industry, with many of the practices involved being illegal, the activities of people in the 'sex industry' have in large part remained clandestine. By purporting to make visible the 'invisible constituency' (Jenness, 1993) - that is, sex workers and the 'sex industry' - the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective received legitimisation and funding from the Government.

The Collective favours an 'identity' model for HIV education and prevention known as 'peer education'. This strategy developed out of

community work in gay cultures (Altman, 1993). It is built on the assumption that individuals more readily receive and accept information from people within their own group or subculture (Murray and Robinson, 1996). However, such a view potentially obscures differences amongst sex workers' social, cultural, and organisational contexts, as well as differences amongst sex workers' practices and identities (Zatz 1997).

In reality, many people in Christchurch who sell sex do not identify as sex workers or prostitutes. The terms 'sex worker' and 'sex industry' include those who work as strippers, as well as those who have sex in massage parlours, escort agencies, on the streets, in the parks, bars and ships for some form of exchange. Yet, particularly those who work the 'beats' (bars and parks of the city) may not think of themselves as sex workers or prostitutes, or as being part of the city's 'sex industry'. As such, the NZPC holds little credibility with this population.

In 1996, a number of media articles drew public attention to a group of young people (some as young as thirteen years of age) who were 'doing sex for favours' in a Christchurch city park (Keenan, 1996). NZPC workers were concerned that these young people were not practicing sex using condoms. Yet because these young people did not identify as sex workers, avenues of education and support offered by the NZPC were limited. The Coordinator comments on the position that the Christchurch branch of the NZPC found themselves in:

"The young people in Latimer Square do not identify as sex workers. I think people find themselves in these situations and they haven't made the choice to be a sex worker, they just find themselves in that position. It was difficult for us (NZPC) because we didn't have any credibility with them, and that was a huge concern. We just wanted to know things were being done as safely as possible. Since then, we have put one of our volunteers into the Youth Health Centre and that seems to be working out."

The NZPC, who have worked hard to develop relationships of trust with parlour workers, escorts and street workers, had little sway with these young people offering sex for favours. For these young people, the activity of selling

sex is not concomitant with the identity of being a sex worker (Somers, 1994). Nevertheless, since the Latimer Square media incident, the Christchurch branch of the NZPC - in conjunction with the Youth Health Centre in Christchurch - have been working on how best to support these people. After long negotiations with the Department of Internal Affairs, funding has been made available for a 'youth worker'. The youth worker will be based at the NZPC drop-in centre in Christchurch to offer support and safer sex education to young people. He or she will maintain a presence on the streets (accompanied, for safety), make referrals where necessary (often to the Youth Health Centre), and act as an advocate. This episode represents how the NZPC's flexibility allows them to support groups in the 'sex industry' not immediately within their preserve, whilst simultaneously maintaining its centrality as a sex work support and education network. Flexibility and sensitivity are integral aspects of the NZPC's success.

Requirements for a Collective employee/volunteer are seen as knowledge of the 'sex industry' and of HIV and AIDS prevention, communication skills, self-confidence and a commitment to continue working in this area (Chetwynd, 1996). However, the Christchurch Coordinator believes that people who have 'worked' actually have more credibility with 'sex industry' workers as well as having first hand knowledge of the problems and solutions that workers may face in promoting safer sexual practices. As she says:

"I think through working I can keep my finger on the pulse of what is going on and what is being said... I personally have always been 'out' but other coordinators haven't. NZPC has a policy of 'non-disclosure'. ... One of the coordinators once managed to alienate a lot of people: The Aids Foundation, Family Planning and most of the sex workers. She had never worked... she should never have got that job."

Volunteers are an important part of community based organisations dealing with the AIDS pandemic (Altman, 1994). Volunteers do many of the day to day tasks involved in running the NZPC and in supporting sex workers. The talk and interaction between volunteers is an important part of developing a

community identity for sex workers, and allowing individual volunteers to develop personal positions from which to think and speak.

All of the volunteers at the Christchurch branch of the Collective are women or identify as transgendered. Representation of different sex worker groups is also considered important; the Collective has endeavoured to have volunteers to represent workers from the streets, massage parlours and escort agencies, as well as transgendered sex workers. In Auckland and Wellington, male workers are represented at the collective, while in Christchurch they have not been able to find a suitable person to represent the issues of male sex workers. The Christchurch Coordinator talks about the problems in finding the right person:

“We have always needed a person to work with males, they need to be trusted by the community. It is really important that the right people are doing the job or it can completely ruin things, turn a lot of people off the organisation”.

The Collective also offers new career possibilities for its workers. Murray and Robinson (1996) argue that one of the most important things that SWOP (the Australian prostitutes' rights group) have done is to provide 'on the job' training, skill development, and improved self esteem, which contributes to the career development of its employees. As they also note, however, the expectations of funders for data collection and funding proposals means that people employed as peer educators are often middle class, educated and articulate, but not necessarily appropriate for all sex workers to relate to (Murray and Robinson, 1996). The example cited above, of the NZPC coordinator who alienated her colleagues, supports Murray and Robinson's (1996) claim.

Thus, even though experience may be seen as important in an NZPC employee, experience is not enough. The person should also be respected by that community and have some "cred". Issues of 'experience' in the 'sex industry' point to the difficulties of representing the concerns and multiple points of view of a complex population. These issues become further

complicated when the NZPC must legitimate themselves to funders, whilst also preserving their authenticity and authority in the 'sex industry' in a time of increasing competition with other community groups for funding. The NZPC is able to maintain HIV and AIDS funding, to provide support and education to sex workers, through extending current definitions of 'sex work' and 'sex workers' to include other forms of sexual behaviour.

The Politics of Prostitution: Reframing the 'Sex Industry'

Like many other social movements, the NZPC is involved in struggles over meaning as they attempt to influence public thinking and government policy as they represent the concerns of those involved in selling sex. Essential to this task of reframing prostitution is the replacement of discourses of deviance and criminality with a work and health based understanding. The 'prostitute' is replaced by the professional 'sex worker', and the aggregate of massage parlours, escort agencies and street workers are constructed as a 'sex industry'.

A major tool in this process is the 'mass media', who can reach a far larger audience than can directly be reached by Collective members. As the Christchurch Coordinator says:

"Before we (the NZPC) were around, the media didn't really have any point of contact in the industry. It has given our organisation and the industry a lot of coverage, not all of it good. They often tend to take what I say out of context."

The establishment of the NZPC has given journalists access to a particular 'sex industry' voice. NZPC activity in the media is usually in response to particular events and issues which concern the 'sex industry'. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, newspaper articles, such as those below, linked AIDS transmission directly with prostitutes:

"Hordes of Aids-infected Sydney prostitutes plan to invade Auckland for next year's Commonwealth Games" ("Hookers Hurry Home!", in Sunday News, 27:6:1989, p. 1).

"And only in New Zealand would this worthy band [NZPC] be subsidised in their daily (nightly) work by us tax payers through the Department of Health.

Who would have guessed that while they are pursuing their professions they are, according to the Department, really fighting Aids?

We, poor innocents, thought they were causing it." ("Subsidies for the Oldest Profession", R Thompson, Letters to the Editor, New Zealand Herald, 31:8:1992)

The NZPC has been able to take advantage of their 'exoticness' (Jenness, 1993; Brown, 1994) as 'real sex workers' to attract media attention and provide alternative images of prostitutes. This has required representatives of the Collective to become skilled in managing the media, and, the media has become a useful avenue for alerting people in the industry and wider community to the issues and concerns of sex workers.

Reframing prostitutes as 'professional sex workers' has reworked the discourses of prostitutes as carriers of disease. The NZPC do not deny the tenuous links of HIV transmission from female to male in the sex work situation, but instead emphasise the sex worker as knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS, and as professional about preventing its transmission amongst wider populations. The new discourse of the 'Healthy Hooker' also emphasises the power that the sex worker has over the client in the sex work transaction through being able to say *no* to unprotected sex. This paragraph taken from the New Internationalist magazine, authored by Catherine Healy and Anna Reed (NZPC members) represents this new discourse of the 'Healthy Hooker':

"In the shadow of the AIDS pandemic, many prostitutes are aware of the implications that the spread of the disease has, not only for their own lives and livelihoods, but also for their many sex partners, and in turn for the general population. Consequently, day and night they instruct their clients in safer sex practices before engaging in sexual contact with them. For those clients who protest the message is clear. To quote an imposing transsexual worker we know, it's 'No joe, no go!' " (Healy and Reed, 1994, p. 16)

While the AIDS pandemic has threatened to cement the historical connection between prostitution and disease in the public's mind (Jenness, 1993, Lichtenstein, 1996), the 'Healthy Hooker' discourse directly challenges this formulation. This discourse offers alternative avenues for prostitutes to

position themselves as professional sex workers and sexual health guardians to the wider community.

Media representations of professional sex workers practicing safer sex have also helped to alleviate the fears of 'sex industry' clients concerned over HIV infection. In this way, the NZPC has endeavoured to subvert discourses characterising prostitutes as carriers of HIV, and helps to maintain a market for sexual services (Lichtenstein, 1996).

As the National Coordinator of the NZPC suggests:

"Aids...has already put a damper on business and would cost more than their (sex workers) livelihood if they didn't play safe. So the vast majority do, and they are no more likely to contract HIV than any other part of the population, possibly less so, according to two overseas studies" (in Swain, 1990).

The shift from prostitute to sex worker creates a space through which citizens' rights can be claimed. In this way, law changes to decriminalise prostitution become a human rights issue, as well as an issue of sexual health in the 'sex industry' community. In the case below, the Christchurch Coordinator uses the media to point out the contradictions and ambiguities of state policy, which on the one hand funds the NZPC as sexual health educators/experts, and on the other hand funds and authorises the New Zealand Police to enforce laws which operate to the detriment of sex workers' health. She argues that discriminatory laws and enforcement practices operate to increase the risk of HIV transmission through hindering NZPC access to the sex working population:

"The Christchurch Prostitutes' Collective coordinator... said it was naive of the police to think street walking could disappear from the city.

But what might happen is fear of the police pushing prostitutes underground, out of the collective's reach for advice on safer sex and anti-HIV information.

That would be contrary to Health Department policy, she said" ("Prostitutes Against Controls On Industry", *Christchurch Star*, 14:8:1992).

In several incidents the police have seized safer sex equipment such as condoms and lube, and even an educational video produced by the NZPC on

safer sex, as evidence in brothel keeping prosecutions. The National Coordinator states:

“...laws make it difficult to promote sexual health programmes in the sex industry. ‘If you walk into a venue today you would not see any health promotion literature because people are still afraid. Post-law reform, we would be able to do a lot more in terms of educating the 90 per cent of the sex industry who are clients’ (in Tyler, 1997, p. 8).

Soliciting for change: Sex Workers forming important Political Links

Drawing on public health concerns about HIV transmission in the ‘sex industry’, the NZPC have linked the politics of AIDS, with its emphasis on promoting safer sex, with the repeal of the ‘sex industry’ laws. This shifts the debate about the laws governing prostitution beyond a human rights issue, to a strategic move to improve and ensure community health.

In pursuit of these goals, the NZPC has developed affiliations with organisations that share concerns about the place of the law in individuals’ private lives, the status of women, and public health. In the process of influencing public policy, individuals at the NZPC have made many associations with existing community groups and politicians. The NZPC recognises that the ultimate target of social movements are policy makers and authoritative elites (McCarthy et al., 1996). As the Listener article below notes, some of the alliances made by the NZPC are surprising, linking prostitutes’ rights with a Christian organisation. This points to the breadth and effectiveness of the NZPC’s networking campaigns which have linked prostitution with the issues of human rights, women’s rights and community health in relation to HIV and AIDS:

“More surprisingly, the call for a law change is being backed by Christian organisation, the YWCA: the traditionally conservative National Council of Women: the Business and Professional Women’s Federation and the caretaker Associate Minister of Health, Maurice Williamson ” (Sarney and Lee, 1996, p. 16).

On a local level, politicians have also supported these moves:

"Sex work must be decriminalised, says the member of Parliament for Christchurch Central, and Opposition spokeswoman on health, Ms Lianne Dalziel.

The issue of decriminalising sex work was on Parliament's agenda she said. Ms Dalziel was speaking at the official opening yesterday of the Christchurch branch of the Prostitutes' Collective's new drop-in centre." ("Decriminalise Sex Work, Says Dalziel" The Press, Christchurch, 26:3:1994)

Several years later, in 1997, moves are being made to introduce a Private Members' Bill into Parliament:

"National MP Katherine O'Regan has joined the Prostitutes' Collective and the YWCA to launch a campaign to legalise prostitution.

O'Regan will next month introduce a private members' bill into Parliament to make it legal for prostitutes to openly offer sex" (Tyler, 1997, p. 8).

Myself and Maria Perez-y-Perez were commissioned by Tim Barnett, the Labour Member of Parliament for Christchurch Central, to prepare a prostitution law reform document scheduled to come out at the same time as O'Regan's Private Members' Bill.

Despite the multitude of threats that the AIDS pandemic poses for prostitutes, it has nonetheless also served to legitimate prostitutes' rights organisations (Jenness, 1993). It has worked to simultaneously provide sex workers with a public forum for pressing their claims, and a way of working within the system. In this way, the NZPC has used resources derived from concerns about the transmission of HIV in the 'sex industry' to link the politics of prostitutes' rights and AIDS, in order to successfully enlist support for the decriminalisation of the laws governing prostitution.

Opening Up the 'Sex Industry' to Research:

Or. Sex Workers making Strategic Links with Academics

As part of the Regional Health Authorities requirements, the Prostitutes' Collective has been pro-active in doing research in the 'sex industry' community. The NZPC chose to work with Jane Chetwynd, Department of Public Health and General Practice in Christchurch, who had an interest in

HIV and AIDS research (Chetwynd, 1987; 1990) and later Elizabeth Plumridge, of the same department. This style of 'participatory research' has benefits for both parties, but also potential problems. As Altman (1993) suggests, 'collaboration' between social researchers and community organisations all too often means providing researchers with a better opportunity to recruit subjects for their studies.

In the case of the NZPC's collaborative research, the relationship has proved mutually beneficial. The NZPC have been involved in doing research through the Department of Public Health and General Practice for a number of years. This relationship offered the NZPC access to 'legitimate research tools', new avenues for research funding through the Health Research Council, and an influential medical and academic audience. The relationship offered Chetwynd and Plumridge new and important avenues for research, with access to a largely clandestine group.

For sex workers in New Zealand, particular types of research knowledge have the potential to undermine discourses about prostitutes as vectors in HIV transmission amongst the heterosexual population, especially when these discourses can be scientifically challenged and disproved by 'legitimate and well known' academics (Lichtenstein, 1996). Research articles on client groups, such as "Discourses of Emotionality in Commercial Sex: The Missing Client Voice" (Plumridge, Chetwynd, and Reed, 1997,a), and "Control and Condoms in Commercial Sex: Client Perspectives" (Plumridge, Chetwynd, and Reed, 1997,b), have been used to shift the focus of debate away from the behaviour of sex workers, and towards the clients of the 'sex industry'. The results of their research have appeared in such publications as The New Zealand Medical Journal (Chetwynd, 1992) several newspapers, and the journal Sociology of Health and Illness (Plumridge et. al., 1997,b).

The focus of this participatory research has been on risk behaviours between clients and sex workers, rather than on the activities of sex workers per se. The sexual activities of prostitutes have been deemed by the

researchers to be less problematic than those of clients because of workers' insistence on safer sex practices (Chetwynd, 1991; Chetwynd, 1992; Woods, 1996). A research focus on male clients' experiences and knowledge of safer sex practices, and the role of male clients in the sexual transaction, has channelled public attention around HIV and AIDS away from prostitutes (Lichtenstein, 1996).

Collaborative research between the NZPC and academic public health researchers has offered the NZPC a way of researching previously unexplored areas of the 'sex industry'. At the same time, academic research findings and their publications serve to legitimate sex workers as sexual health and citizens rights advocates. Thus a move from prostitutes as vectors of disease to professional sex workers is achieved.

Ambiguous Spaces: The NZPC working among State Organisations

As a government funded health organisation simultaneously representing 'sex industry' personnel, the NZPC has developed a role as broker to the 'sex industry' for a number of government organisations. While this relationship has enabled sex workers greater access to these government departments to claim their own citizen rights, it has also benefited government groups such as the police, the Inland Revenue Department and the Social Welfare Department in their work.

The NZPC and the police in many ways operate through contradictory state positions. The NZPC are state funded to manage the sexual health of 'sex industry' personnel, while the police are state funded to enforce the laws governing prostitution. Yet the ambiguity of the NZPC's position allows them to both criticise some of the practices of the police and to use the police in their work. The Christchurch branch of the NZPC are in regular contact with the police detective who is employed to work closely with the 'sex industry' personnel. This relationship operates reciprocally, as the police are concerned with reducing the incidence of exploitation and crime in the 'sex industry', and

developing a good working relationship with sex workers. The NZPC are also interested in supporting sex workers against violent or exploitative clients/employers. In reality the police offer one of the only ways through which the NZPC can protect sex workers from exploitation.

This relationship benefits the police by allowing them to gather more information on the practices and networks of crime in the city's⁴ 'sex industry'. The police detective comments:

"They are definitely allies, [however] the NZPC is not an institution that likes to be seen siding with the police because they have their own agendas... [But] liaison between us is pretty good, if I need to know anything which is sensitive, not about an individual but about a parlour or something, and no one else will tell me, they will usually be able to put me in touch with someone who can tell me what the hell is going on."

In the last four years, the detective involved with the 'sex industry' in Christchurch has had a reasonably good relationship with that branch of the NZPC. The Coordinator comments on their relationship:

"The police detective has been more approachable than the last guy and it has definitely made a difference to our work and to others in the industry too."

The legally ambiguous position of sex workers often means that the police are not contacted directly to resolve disputes in the 'sex industry'. On occasions, the NZPC fields calls and complaints from sex workers about clients or owners/managers that are violent or carry out exploitative practices. The Collective has developed a crucial role as buffer or broker through which sex workers can take disputes to the police. For instance, soon after I had started going along to the NZPC drop-in centre in Christchurch, a sex worker from one of the parlours came in complaining of being defrauded of her

⁴ While the police do still prosecute 'sex industry' personnel, a change in public sensibilities in relation to prostitution activities (as noted in Judge Unwin's (1996) summing up of the 'Corporate Affairs' brothel keeping trial), combined with the NZPC's media statements about police prosecutions inhibiting safer sex education and practices in the 'sex industry', have reduced the prosecuting practices of the police. Limited police resources and the low priority of prostitution offences have moved policing practices increasingly towards intelligence gathering in the 'sex industry'.

money. She had not been paid the \$500 worth of credit card money she was owed by the parlour owner. The owner claimed that the worker had seen clients that she had met in the massage parlour in her own time, and that the money was his because he had lost the commission normally paid by the client as a massage fee⁵.

On this occasion, the sex worker went to the NZPC to complain. At the same time the police detective happened to be at the NZPC drop-in centre on other matters. He heard the story and rang the owner. The owner came straight down and settled with the worker. At first the owner was very angry that the worker and the Collective had called the police, but later calmed down when it was explained to him that the detective had already been at the Collective on other matters. The dispute was resolved by the worker being reimbursed most of her money.

Similarly, the NZPC have acted as support arbitrators for sex workers who have been the victims of sexual exploitation. In the case below, the Christchurch branch of the NZPC were involved in supporting these sex workers in their decision to make a complaint to the police and further seek prosecution for unlawful sexual connection:

“A man and a woman who were said to have staged a ‘training exercise’ for an escort agency that resulted in charges of alleged sexual offences were remanded...The offences allegedly happened on August 18 when the two female complainants were engaged for escort work by the accused” (“Man, Woman Face Sex Charges”, The Press, Christchurch, 8:7:1996).

The NZPC therefore allows sex workers better access to the police for dispute resolution. This demonstrates the NZPC’s contradictory position as broker. On the one hand, the NZPC uses the media to illustrate how the laws governing prostitution activities and their police enforcement can be intrusive in the ‘sex industry’, inhibiting the education and practice of safer sex, and

⁵ Credit cards are a constant source of dispute in the industry, as owners continually ‘with-hold’ workers earnings in lieu of shift fees, fines, or bonds.

violating the human rights of sex workers. Yet, on the other hand, the NZPC is able to use the police as a way of supporting sex workers in violent or exploitative situations. In this way, the NZPC uses its position to act as a buffer between the police and sex workers, giving sex workers better access to police resources. Furthermore, the examples of the exploitative owners given above demonstrates how the NZPC must negotiate these different groups. They must endeavour not to alienate owners because they are gatekeepers to the sex workers. Thus, the NZPC must weave a path between the agendas of the owners of sex businesses and the police in order to support sex workers.

The NZPC as Broker to the Inland Revenue and Social Welfare

Departments

Through the NZPC's role as spokespersons regarding issues pertaining to the 'sex industry', they have entered into negotiations with other government departments such as the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) and the Social Welfare Department (DSW). Publicity, such as this newspaper article, has prompted the NZPC to work more closely with these organisations to ensure fair treatment for sex workers⁶.

"His department has set up a 'special audit' unit to track down and issue tax assessments in the 'illegals sector'. It will focus on the proceeds of the drug and sex industries... 'The tax law draws no distinction between legal and illegal income' " (Luke, 1994).

Some years ago the NZPC initiated a meeting in Wellington with the Inland Revenue Department to discuss taxation in the 'sex industry'⁷. At that time,

⁶ The NZPC actually entered into negotiations with the IRD before 1994. This article represents the kinds of concerns which prompted those NZPC negotiations.

⁷ The National Coordinator of the NZPC told me that consultation with IRD was initiated after great thought to the implications of their actions. While the NZPC were concerned about best representing sex workers interests they were aware that their actions could have been perceived as impacting negatively on the 'sex industry'. They have not facilitated access to the 'sex industry' but acted as a broker between 'sex industry' personnel and the IRD.

the IRD had a proposal for illegal income taxation that they wanted the NZPC to endorse. As the Christchurch Coordinator says, it was “completely unrealistic, we knew it was not good for the people in the ‘sex industry’”. Since this time, meetings between the Wellington NZPC and the IRD have produced a pamphlet designed specifically for those working in the ‘sex industry’. The pamphlet sets out clearly how one goes about declaring income, and the work equipment - such as condoms, lubricant, and clothing - on which workers can claim tax deductions.

While tax is a concern for sex workers, an NZPC representative outlines some of the positive aspects of it:

“There is still a huge fear about taxation. The Inland Revenue are trying to make it as easy as possible. They know people are going to under-report but they figure some is better than nothing. In some ways paying tax is good. It can make you feel that sex work is like any other work. It is easier to verify your income, and it makes getting loans for a house or car easier because there is a record of your income.”

Similarly, several years ago the Social Welfare Department’s benefit fraud investigation team, with police assistance, and nine search warrants, visited massage parlours in Christchurch and checked sex workers names on the police register against the social welfare benefits register. This situation prompted the NZPC to enter into negotiations with Department of Social Welfare. The NZPC’s concern was for ‘insensitive and heavy handed’ treatment of sex workers by the DSW. Since then further negotiations have taken place with DSW’s Income Support staff, and in Christchurch personnel from Income Support have had sessions at the NZPC to raise their awareness of issues facing sex workers.

In summary, Jenness (1993) in her American study argues that prostitutes’ rights organisations have been used by state agencies to gain access to the ‘sex industry’ for matters concerning AIDS. In New Zealand the NZPC, through representing the interests of their constituents, have also developed links with non-health related government departments. The NZPC operates as a broker

between 'sex industry' personnel and both the IRD and DSW, distributing information specifically prepared by these departments for 'sex industry' personnel. The NZPC has been prompted by the sometimes inappropriate actions of these departments in dealing with sex workers to enter into a relationship as a broker between these groups. Sex workers have benefited from this relationship by having 'sex industry sensitive' staff at Income Support and IRD who have been trained to understand the unique situation of 'sex industry' workers.

However, this has emerged as a mutually beneficial arrangement. While neither the IRD nor the DSW necessarily need this relationship, they have benefited from it by gaining a greater understanding of how best to structure their services to cater for sex workers' unique situations. This increased awareness of issues pertaining to those that work in the 'sex industry' has improved the services provided by these departments for sex workers. At the same time, this relationship has also made visible an otherwise invisible constituency. In this way, both DSW and IRD have benefited from the relationship through having their information circulated, thus stimulating sex worker interest in these departments and facilitating easy access for sex workers.

Summary

In this chapter, the focus has been on the position held by the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective as both a community organisation operated by sex workers for sex workers, and as a health provider funded substantially by the Regional Health Authorities. The change to a Labour Government in 1984, and that government's consequent concern with a possible AIDS pandemic, opened up new spaces for prostitutes to organise and apply for funding around the issue of community health. This space, created by the government of the time, enlisted the NZPC to supply safer sex education and equipment to the 'sex industry'. The legitimacy provided by state funding, and their role in

community health promotion, has given members of the NZPC a voice in public policy and the media.

State funding can diminish political concerns in activist community groups (Murray and Robinson, 1996; Altman 1993). Nevertheless, the NZPC has been able to stay on course with its political agenda of the decriminalisation of the 'sex industry'. This has been borne out in the recent media statement by Katherine O'Regan on the forthcoming Private Members' Bill to decriminalise the 'soliciting of male clients' by sex workers.

In this chapter, I have suggested that the NZPC occupies an ambiguous position/space as a result of government responses to the HIV and AIDS health crisis in New Zealand. Yet it is precisely the ambiguity of their position which has enabled the NZPC to work with, and amongst, various government and non-government groups such as the Regional Health Authorities, the police, Members of Parliament, public health academics, the medical profession, sex workers and sex business owners, not to mention other community groups (notably the Christian-based YWCA) and of course, the media. In most cases, the NZPC has been able to weave a path through the various agendas of these groups in order to best represent the concerns and issues of sex workers and the 'sex industry'.

Throughout this process, the NZPC has been able to utilise its 'exoticness' as a prostitutes' collective in the media to challenge the discourses of 'prostitutes as vectors of disease', offering instead a new identity of sex workers as 'Healthy Hookers', where professional prostitutes become guardians of heterosexual safer sex practices. In this way, the NZPC has linked issues of human rights, and the rights of women to use their bodies as they see fit, with the politics of AIDS. It has been the combination of these issues which the NZPC has used to lobby public and political support for the repeal of stigmatising and dehumanising laws which regulate prostitution in New Zealand. The NZPC have reworked old arguments about the discriminating effect of prostitution laws, arguing that these laws are

detrimental to the practice of safer sex, and the safer sex education of sex workers and clients alike.

CHAPTER SIX

NETWORKS, ALLIANCES AND GOVERNANCE IN THE 'SEX INDUSTRY': A CONCLUSION TO THE THESIS

The central concern of this thesis has been to explore the interrelationships between different networks of actors involved in the organisation and production of commercial sexual services in the city of Christchurch. The production of these sexual services is embedded in the joint activities of commercial sex business owners, managers, sex workers, clients of sex workers, government departments, and the police. These practices have emerged in the local community, and have depended on New Zealand's particular economic and political systems.

Thinking with the concept of 'networks' in this thesis has opened up the field of prostitution study by embedding dynamic sex worker-client relationships in the organisational structure and practices of the 'sex industry'. The way sex is organised - through massage parlours, escort agencies, and on the streets - becomes an important determining factor in how the sex worker-client relationships are mediated by the various owners and managers of sex businesses.

So too, this thesis has endeavoured to represent 'sex industry' actors in dynamic relationships with each other. Mutual attempts to regulate and control prostitution activities have prompted a number of intended and unintended consequences. These consequences have created opportunities for new forms of sex work organisation, as well as scope to consolidate older forms of organisation. This thesis also demonstrates how police practices have changed in relation to the ways that the 'sex industry' has developed, creating opportunities for new styles of police work. These changes have been further consolidated as public concerns regarding the 'sex industry' have moved away

from a moral and criminal emphasis to incorporate new health concerns in response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. New forms of governance have developed as the state has drawn in sex workers to support and educate their own community on the issues of HIV and AIDS in order to reduce the risk of HIV transmission.

In summary, this thesis suggests alternatives to an analysis of the 'sex industry' based on purely 'macro' or 'micro' conceptions of prostitution. The thesis incorporates both a grounded, local, ethnographic study of the Christchurch 'sex industry', and a consideration of national initiatives. Furthermore, this thesis has endeavoured to both set out the structure of the industry, and at another level, to represent that structure as consisting of overlapping networks of heterogenous actors whose practices are contingent and shifting.

Structure of the Industry

The thesis has explored how the client-sex worker relationship is embedded in the wider organisational practices of commercial sex businesses. I argue that relationships between clients and workers cannot be understood without reference to the overall structure of the 'sex industry', the different styles of organising prostitution, and the individual actions of owners and managers. These, in combination, shape the ways that sex work gets done in particular locations and at particular times.

As the thesis demonstrates, the 'sex industry' is not a monolithic structure; it consists of a number of different ways of organising prostitution, each comprised of the actions of many disparate actors. The thesis illustrates this claim by detailing how the massage parlour emerged as a dominant form of organising commercial sex in Christchurch's inner city. At the same time, in the last seven years, the escort agency has developed to rival the massage parlour as an alternative form of prostitution. These two forms organise their prostitution activities quite differently from each other.

In selling sex, both the massage parlour and the escort agency weave a path amongst the laws governing the organisation of prostitution. The massage parlour manoeuvres around the laws by charging the client for a massage, not a sexual service. In a similar way, the escort service charges the client for the escort's time. Both of these businesses construct quasi-legal spaces to operate by playing on ambiguities built into the law.

While both of these businesses organise their sex workers differently, they both create an environment where sex work gets done through a quasi-freelance system. In this way, the sex worker negotiates fees and/or services with the client in private. The massage parlour sex worker keeps all the money she earns from the client (although she often has to pay a \$20 shift fee), whereas the escort must split the client's money with the escort agency (this is usually done on a share basis).

This quasi-freelance system has been utilised by sex businesses to get workers to do better sex work. In the massage parlour, the client can choose which woman he wants to have sex with. This increases the pressure for sex workers to make the relationship between themselves and the client more personal, in order to get chosen more often. In this way, stable incomes in sex work revolve around gaining regular clients.

In escort agencies, personalising the service to the client is even more important because the client cannot see the escort worker. In this way, competition operates through an individual's reputation of good service. Escort agencies capitalise on this by advertising workers by name. This also creates a more intimate arrangement between the escort and the client, not overtly mediated by a business.

Controls on the sex workers' behaviour are linked to the client's choice in both massage parlours and escort agencies. Often, individual records are kept on each sex worker which document whether that worker has been chosen on his/her physical attributes, or whether the client requested them by name. This tells the business, which relies on repeat customers, whether that sex worker is

doing a 'good job' in the private room/client's house. That is, if the client is not coming back to see a particular sex worker, the manager may assume that the client has not been satisfied with the sex worker's behaviour.

Massage parlours and escort agencies operate their businesses in different locations. Unlike the large massage parlours in the city, the escort agency operates from suburban houses. Some escorts operate privately from their own homes. Others combine with several other workers and work from suburban houses. Still others organise ten or twenty staff members who may be on-call in their own homes, and will be telephoned or paged by the agency when a job comes in. This is a different situation from the massage parlour where the sex worker goes to work and stays there for a six to ten hour shift while waiting for clients to enter. The massage parlour must employ staff to greet the clients and answer the telephone, and must pay the large city rents. In this way, the escort agency involves lower overheads, and allows for more diverse and flexible forms of organising prostitution.

These two styles of organising commercial sex offer different benefits and constraints to sex workers and their clients. The massage parlour offers the sex worker a regular, stable environment through which to construct and complete sexual services. Escort sex work involves the creation of sites for sex work in multiple locations around the city. Often these locations are more dangerous than work in the massage parlour, yet the flexibility of work practices in the escort agency can benefit sex workers. For instance, in out-call escort organisations, workers can operate from their homes where they are contacted by the agency as jobs become available. However, escorts often work in isolation from other sex workers. This contrasts with the massage parlour where other sex workers similarly employed can offer support and information about clients and sexual health issues.

Both escort agencies and massage parlours offer the client a more comfortable and safe environment for sexual services than may be possible through street prostitution. Commercial sex organised through escort agencies

benefits clients by creating a more intimate and personal service in the client's home, hotel room or motel unit.

Police practices are important in understanding the structure of the 'sex industry', and the relationship between the sex worker and the client. This thesis argues that in recent years police have developed a closer working relationship with the 'sex industry', seeking to regulate and control the operations of commercial sex rather than prohibit them. Changes in policing priorities and public sensibilities about the 'sex industry' have reduced the attention the police give to arresting brothel keepers and sex workers. Yet prosecutions do still result when 'sex industry' personnel step beyond the boundaries proscribed by police. While police tolerance has allowed sex businesses to operate more freely, it has also allowed the police to pursue other agendas amongst various forms of sex work organisation. Using the ambiguous legal position of prostitution activities, police barter for information about 'crime' and 'criminals' whose paths cut across the 'sex industry'.

The NZPC is another element of the 'sex industry' which operates to support the rights of sex workers and educate them in the practices of safer sex, and HIV and AIDS issues. In this way, the NZPC operates to regulate the sexual health of 'sex industry' workers and helps to dispel clients' fears of HIV and AIDS transmission. They have also developed an arbitration role between sex workers and the owners of sex businesses. The ambiguity of the NZPC's position - as both agent of the government and agent of the industry - has allowed them to operate amongst a number of different government and non-government groups in order to create a safer and more healthy 'sex industry'. One result has been their subsequent ability to operate as a buffer between the police and sex workers, giving sex workers better access to police protection from exploitation and from violent clients and employers.

The 'Sex Industry' as a Dynamic Entity

If one focus of this thesis has been to characterise sex worker-client relationships as embedded in the organisational patterns and practices of commercial sex businesses, another has been to present the contingent and changing nature of the 'sex industry'. This thesis has endeavoured to convey the dynamic character of the 'sex industry', the ways its structures and practices are contingent and constantly changing as sex business owners and workers strive to make money in a context of regulation, competition and viruses which threaten their livelihoods.

The 'sex industry' is in a constant process of change; Its dynamic character flows from changes in formal and informal police practices, and the laws governing the organisation of prostitution and responses to these. In this context, competition between sex businesses and changes in the local economy have prompted new forms of sex business and new ways of doing sex work. In turn, as a response to these changes, new forms of policing have developed as police have negotiated their own position among sex business owners and workers. Similarly, as new concerns about the sexual health of the industry and their clients have emerged through the HIV and AIDS crisis, new organisations, operated by sex workers themselves, have developed to monitor and educate the industry and the public about safer forms of sexual behaviour.

The massage parlour has developed as a ubiquitous form of commercial sex, yet it is also an unintended consequence of the combination of state legislation, police regulation and the innovations of parlour owners. The Massage Parlours Act 1978 both constrains the activities of massage parlours, while also offering them opportunities to operate licensed premises; an uneasy position between legally selling sex and illegally operating as brothels. Out of this ambiguity, spaces can potentially open up for organised crime and criminal entrepreneurs to offer massage parlours financial support.

While the Act has in part been successful in allowing the police to monitor and regulate who could own, manage and work in a massage parlour, it has

also helped to consolidate the parlour as a major organisational form of commercial sex in the city. In turn, this consolidation has had benefits for stabilising the work of sex workers, creating a safer and more comfortable environment for both workers and clients.

The stabilisation of the massage parlour industry helped change the focus of policing in the 'sex industry', and made it easier. The clustering of massage parlours in the city offered increased access to owners, managers and workers in the 'sex industry' for the police. This, combined with the legal ambiguity of organising sex, has allowed police to develop and extend modes of gathering information about crime and criminals that cut across the 'sex industry'. In this way, massage parlours developed as another node in the police intelligence network.

So too, this consolidation of the massage parlour as a dominant form of organising prostitution, and changing police practices, provided new opportunities for sexual services to be organised in the suburbs. Escort agencies emerged as rivals to massage parlours, they utilised new locations in the suburbs taking advantage of lower overheads to recreate the 'brothel' space in multiple locations around Christchurch. Escort agency prostitution opened up new spaces for sex workers to own and operate businesses which were less dependent on 'criminal' financial support because of their lower 'start up' costs.

In response to the increase in escort agencies came new forms of control from the police who endeavoured to regulate this burgeoning style of prostitution. Because escort prostitution had moved away from the jurisdiction of the Massage Parlours Act 1978, police had to employ informal methods through which to monitor escort agencies' activities. The police enrolled The Press newspaper to restrict escort agency advertising to those escorts who had registered their names, addresses and telephone numbers with the police. In turn, this process had the unintended consequence of consolidating and stabilising escort agencies as an alternative form of operating sex work.

Within sex businesses, the practices of doing sex work and selling sexual services have changed as escort agencies and massage parlours strive to draw new customers and consolidate old ones. Competition for the client dollar has emerged as a new form of control of sex workers by owners and managers. Sex businesses have endeavoured to ensure sex workers provide the client with a more personal service through positioning sex work as a quasi-freelance system where the sex worker is in direct competition for clients with other sex workers.

Still further developments in the 'sex industry' have been concerns about the transmission of HIV and AIDS between clients and sex workers, and through sex work to the larger community. These developments have both constrained and enabled the actions of sex workers, and shaped the 'sex industry's' emerging organisational pattern. The events around this crisis have shifted concerns about prostitution away from criminal and moral issues, to those of public health.

As awareness about HIV and AIDS developed in New Zealand, the Government's Regional Health Authorities funded sex workers to educate sex workers (in safer sex practices) and monitor their own community. The result was the emergence of the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective.

The NZPC developed a new rhetoric through which to frame the sale of sexual services: prostitution as sex work, prostitutes as sex workers, and the collection of escort agencies, massage parlours and street workers as the 'sex industry'. The NZPC have successfully linked up the politics of AIDS with the politics of prostitutes' rights groups, arguing that the decriminalisation of prostitution laws will facilitate the education and provision of safer sex material and equipment.

The position of the NZPC allows it to variously link across all the areas and branches of the 'sex industry', as well as with government departments and non government organisations. The NZPC operates at once as a spokesperson on behalf of the 'sex industry', and a broker between the 'sex industry' and

government departments such as the police, the Inland Revenue Department, the Social Welfare Department and government health organisations.

Public Policy and Possible Futures for the 'Sex Industry'

Of concern to sex workers, to health workers and to politicians interested in the issues of HIV and AIDS in the 'sex industry' is the reform of the laws governing the organisation and soliciting of sexual services. The NZPC argues that safer sex practices and education are inhibited by the illegality of the actions of 'sex industry' personnel. This issue has sparked off a nationwide debate about the reform of the laws governing prostitution activities. Drawing on the understandings presented in this thesis and my own work on 'sex industry' law reform, I wish to briefly present some of my concerns about decriminalisation and its possible effects on the future of the 'sex industry'.

In April 1997, National MP Katherine O'Regan joined with the NZPC and the YWCA to introduce a Private Members' Bill "...to make it legal for prostitutes to openly offer sex" (Tyler, 1997). The NZPC are interested in further developing this 'Bill' to include the repeal of all laws which prohibit the organisation of commercial sex. The repeal of these laws would prompt questions around how the operation of prostitution businesses and the working lives of individual sex workers would be affected. In other words, who might the decriminalisation of prostitution empower?

I agree that the decriminalisation of the 'sex industry' will enable safer sex education to reach a wider range of people, most importantly commercial sex clients. I also agree that it will empower sex workers to use police services and protection more, and similarly help to reduce the stigma of working in an illegal industry. Yet the sex worker might also become more vulnerable to new forms of control and regulation from such interested parties as public health professionals, the Inland Revenue Department, and others.

In a decriminalised 'sex industry', sex businesses will surely benefit. They could potentially advertise their real identities as brothels, their range of services and their prices. They can do neither of these under the current laws - yet they are important areas to exploit while trying to remain competitive.

As this thesis has demonstrated, the organisational structures of sex businesses are inextricably linked to their legal position. In 'free market' prostitution, the organisation of prostitution activities is likely to change - changing the relationship between the business and the worker, and the worker and the client. For example, at present, the massage parlour operation cannot inform the client what sexual services he can get, nor how much they cost. To make the process easier and more open for the customer under decriminalisation, the massage parlour could ask the client to pay an inclusive sum at the door as they entered, rather than, as at present, the sum for the massage only. The client could then choose the woman or man that they would like to have sex with. Removing the economic transaction between the sex worker and the client in this way could empower the client. For the sex worker, control of the money for the actual provision of sex is a bargaining tool. In the current context, the worker and the client can bargain over the nature of the service and the price. If the client pays an inclusive sum at the door, it might be more difficult for the sex worker to say 'no' to a particular client, or 'no' to his requests for particular services.

Potentially, this system could include the owners of sex businesses paying their staff a commission based on the number of clients they saw. This might shift the locus of power in the economic transaction away from the sex worker to the business, who would collect all the money for the actual provision of sex. This has the potential to increase problems over money, given that sex businesses are often unreliable in paying workers the credit card money owed to them, and that sex business sometimes withhold money in lieu of fines, shift fees, or as bonds to keep the worker from leaving the business.

As Shannon Bell (1994) points out, prostitutes' rights discourses present the market as the means for prostitutes to be in control of their sexuality and to have economic self-determination. This analysis is blind to the ways in which capitalist economies are likely to operate to disempower and oppress sex workers (Bell, 1994; Shrage 1994, cited in Zatz, 1997). Left to the market to regulate, the 'sex industry's' future is uncertain. On the one hand, it could become more centralised as bigger businesses move into the market (such as happened in the legalised system in Victoria, Australia). Alternatively, prostitution could come to be organised through existing entertainment businesses such as casinos or large hotels (as in Las Vegas) (Frey et al., 1982). Or it could develop into a 'cottage industry', operating through small brothels/escort agencies, as is the trend in some parts of suburban Australia (Neave, 1994). In fact, prostitution activities in a decriminalised system could operate in all of these ways. In many ways, the 'sex industry' under decriminalisation would have the legal space be more open about issues of HIV and AIDS education. At the same time, the industry could also become so dispersed and diverse that accessing individual sex workers and clients may become very difficult.

As this thesis suggests, decriminalising the 'sex industry' will not guarantee an ungoverned 'sex industry'. The industry would likely have a number of other governing bodies. These might include making Regional Health Authorities responsible for licensing and regulatory forms of control. Given concerns about HIV and AIDS transmission in the 'sex industry', it is possible that a 'regulatory body' to grant licenses for selling sex or conduct health checks of premises, will become established under decriminalisation.

The future for sex work and sex workers is, at present, uncertain. Yet a reform of the laws governing the organisation and selling of sexual services does seem imminent. On the basis of this study, however, it seems unlikely that a decriminalised 'sex industry' will be an unregulated/uncontrolled industry. Under a decriminalised system, it is likely that new struggles for

control and governance of the 'sex industry' will develop between those concerned about public health, those concerned about crime, those concerned about sex workers' rights and safety, and those concerned about collecting revenue from this new style industry.

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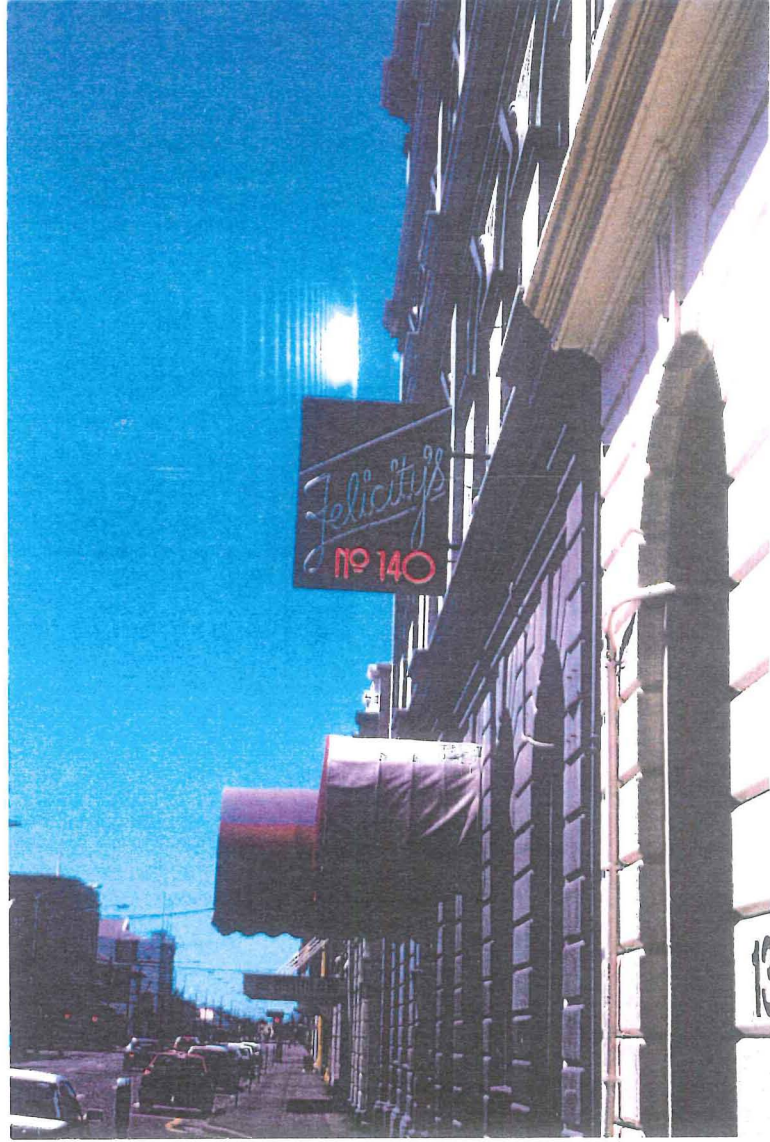
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APPENDIX